

LION AND DRAGON  
IN NORTHERN CHINA

R. F. JOHNSTON

莊士敦















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VIEW FROM THE HUAN-TS'UI-LOU ON THE CITY WALL OF WEIHAWEI.  
(Showing the interior of the walled city, the island of Liuking and the Harbour, and the European settlement of Port Edward).



# LION AND DRAGON IN NORTHERN CHINA

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TO

SIR JAMES HALDANE STEWART LOCKHART

K.C.M.G., COMMISSIONER OF WEIHAIWEI

IN MEMORY OF

TWO MOONLIT NIGHTS AT LUTAO-K'OU

FIVE FROSTY MORNINGS AT PEI-K'OU TEMPLE

AND A HUNDRED BREEZY GALLOPS

OVER THE HILLS AND SANDS OF WEIHAIWEI





## P R E F A C E

THE meeting-place of the British Lion and the Chinese Dragon in northern China consists of the port and Territory of Weihaiwei. It is therefore with this district, and the history, folk-lore, religious practices and social customs of its people, that the following pages are largely occupied. But Weihaiwei is in many respects a true miniature of China, and a careful study of native life and character, as they are exhibited in this small district, may perhaps give us a clearer and truer insight into the life and character of the Chinese race than we should gain from any superficial survey of China as a whole. Its present status under the British Crown supplies European observers with a unique opportunity for the close study of sociological and other conditions in rural China. If several chapters of this book seem to be but slightly concerned with the special subject of Weihaiwei, it is because the chief interest of the place to the student lies in the fact that it is an epitomised China, and because if we wish fully to understand even this small fragment of the Empire we must make many long excursions through the wider fields

of Chinese history, sociology and religion. The photographs (with certain exceptions noted in each case) have been taken by the author during his residence at Weihaiwei. From Sir James H. Stewart Lockhart, K.C.M.G., Commissioner of Weihaiwei, he has received much kind encouragement which he is glad to take this opportunity of acknowledging; and he is indebted to Captain A. Hilton-Johnson for certain information regarding the personnel of the late Chinese Regiment. His thanks are more especially due to his old friend Mr. D. P. Heatley, Lecturer in History at the University of Edinburgh, for his generous assistance in superintending the publication of the book.

R. F. JOHNSTON.

WÊN-CH'ÜAN-T'ANG,  
WEIHAIWEI,  
*May 1, 1910.*



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WEIHAIWEI . . . . .	<i>at the end</i>
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# LION AND DRAGON IN NORTHERN CHINA

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

LESS than a dozen years have passed since the guns of British warships first saluted the flag of their country at the Chinese port of Weihaiwei, yet it is nearly a century since the white ensign was seen there for the first time. In the summer of 1816 His Britannic Majesty's frigate *Alceste*, accompanied by the sloop *Lyra*, bound for the still mysterious and unsurveyed coasts of Korea and the Luchu Islands, sailed eastwards from the mouth of the Pei-ho along the northern coast of the province of Shantung, and on the 27th August of that year cast anchor in the harbour of "Oie-hai-oie." Had the gallant officers of the *Alceste* and *Lyra* been inspired with knowledge of future political developments, they would doubtless have handed down to us an interesting account of the place and its inhabitants. All we learn from Captain Basil Hall's delightful chronicle of the voyage of the two ships consists of a few details—in the truest sense ephemeral—as to wind and weather, and a statement that the rocks of the mainland consist of "yellowish felspar, white quartz, and black mica." The rest is silence.

From that time until the outbreak of the Sino-

Japanese War in 1894 the British public heard little or nothing of Weihaiwei. After the fall of Port Arthur, during that war, it was China's only remaining naval base. The struggle that ensued in January 1895, when, with vastly superior force, the Japanese attacked it by land and sea, forms one of the few episodes of that war upon which the Chinese can look back without overwhelming shame. Victory, however, went to those who had the strongest battalions and the stoutest hearts. The three-weeks siege ended in the suicide of the brave Chinese Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Ting, and in the loss to China of her last coast-fortress and the whole of her fleet. Finally, as a result of the seizure of Port Arthur by Russia and a subsequent three-cornered agreement between Japan, China and England, Weihaiwei was leased to Great Britain under the terms of a Convention signed at Peking in July 1898.

The British robe of empire is a very splendid and wonderfully variegated garment. It bears the gorgeous scarlets and purples of the Indies, it shimmers with the diamonds of Africa, it is lustrous with the whiteness of our Lady of Snows, it is scented with the spices of Ceylon, it is decked with the pearls and soft fleeces of Australia. But there is also—pinned to the edge of this magnificent robe—a little drab-coloured ribbon that is in constant danger of being dragged in the mud or trodden underfoot, and is frequently the object of disrespectful gibes. This is Weihaiwei.

Whether the imperial robe would not look more imposing without this nondescript appendage is a question which may be left to the student of political fashion-plates: it will concern us hardly at all in the pages of this book. An English newspaper published in China has dubbed Weihaiwei the Cinderella of the British Empire, and speculates vaguely as to where her Fairy Prince is to come from. Alas, the Fairy Godmother must first do her share in making poor



Cinderella beautiful and presentable before any Fairy Prince can be expected to find in her the lady of his dreams: and the Godmother has certainly not yet made her appearance, unless, indeed, the British Colonial Office is presumptuous enough to put forward a claim (totally unjustifiable) to that position. By no means do I, in the absence of the Fairy Prince, propose to ride knight-like into the lists of political controversy wearing the gage of so forlorn a damsel-in-distress as Weihaiwei. Let me explain, dropping metaphor, that the following pages will contain but slender contribution to the vexed questions of the strategic importance of the port or of its potential value as a *depôt* of commerce. Are not such things set down in the books of the official scribes? Nor will they constitute a guide-book that might help exiled Europeans to decide upon the merits of Weihaiwei as a resort for white-cheeked children from Shanghai and Hongkong, or as affording a dumping-ground for brass-bands and bathing-machines. On these matters, too, information is not lacking. As for the position of Weihaiwei on the playground of international politics, it may be that Foreign Ministers have not yet ceased to regard it as an interesting toy to be played with when sterner excitements are lacking. But it will be the aim of these pages to avoid as far as possible any incursion into the realm of politics: for it is not with Weihaiwei as a diplomatic shuttlecock that they profess to deal, but with Weihaiwei as the ancestral home of many thousands of Chinese peasants, who present a stolid and almost changeless front to all the storms and fluctuations of politics and war.

Books on China have appeared in large numbers during the past few years, and the production of another seems to demand some kind of apology. Yet it cannot be said that as a field for the ethnologist, the historian, the student of comparative religion and of folk-lore, the sociologist or the moral philosopher,



China has been worked out. The demand for books that profess to deal in a broad and general way with China and its people as a whole has probably, indeed, been fully satisfied: but China is too vast a country to be adequately described by any one writer or group of writers, and the more we know about China and its people the more strongly we shall feel that future workers must confine themselves to less ambitious objects of study than the whole Empire. The pioneer who with his prismatic compass passes rapidly over half a continent has nearly finished all he can be expected to do; he must soon give place to the surveyor who with plane-table and theodolite will content himself with mapping a section of a single province.

It is a mistake to suppose that any class of European residents in or visitors to the Far East possesses the means of acquiring sound knowledge of China and the Chinese. Government officials—whether Colonial or Consular—are sometimes rather apt to assume that what they do not know about China is not worth knowing; missionaries show a similar tendency to believe that an adequate knowledge of the life and “soul” of the Chinese people is attainable only by themselves; while journalists and travellers, believing that officials and missionaries are necessarily one-sided or bigoted, profess to speak with the authority that comes of breezy open-mindedness and impartiality. The tendency in future will be for each writer to confine himself to that aspect of Chinese life with which he is personally familiar, or that small portion of the Empire that comes within the radius of his personal experience. If he is a keen observer he will find no lack of material ready to his hand. Perhaps the richer and more luxuriant fields of inquiry may be occupied by other zealous workers: then let him steal quietly into some thorny and stony corner which they have neglected, some wilderness that no one else cares about, and set to

work with spade and hoe to prepare a little garden for himself. Perhaps if he is industrious the results may be not wholly disappointing; and the passer-by who peeps over his hedge to jeer at his folly and simplicity in cultivating a barren moor may be astonished to find that the stony soil has after all produced good fruit and beautiful flowers. In attempting a description of the people of Weihaiwei, their customs and manners, their religion and superstitions, their folk-lore, their personal characteristics, their village homes, I have endeavoured to justify my choice of a field of investigation that has so far been neglected by serious students of things Chinese. It may be foolish to hope that this little wilderness will prove to be of the kind that blossoms like a rose, yet at least I shall escape the charge of having staked out a valley and a hill and labelled it "China."

Hitherto Weihaiwei has been left in placid enjoyment of its bucolic repose. The lords of commerce despise it, the traveller dismisses it in a line, the sinologue knows it not, the ethnologist ignores it, the historian omits to recognise its existence before the fateful year 1895, while the local British official, contenting himself with issuing tiny Blue-book reports which nobody reads, dexterously strives to convince himself and others that its administrative problems are sufficiently weighty to justify his existence and his salary. And yet a few years of residence in this unpampered little patch of territory—years spent to a great extent without European companionship, when one must either come to know something of the inhabitants and their ways or live like a mole—have convinced one observer, and would doubtless convince many others, that to the people of Weihaiwei life is as momentous and vivid, as full of joyous and tragic interest, as it is to the proud people of the West, and that mankind here is no less worthy the pains of study than mankind elsewhere.

There is an interesting discovery to be made almost



as soon as one has dipped below the surface of the daily life of the Weihaiwei villagers, and it affords perhaps ample compensation and consolation for the apparent narrowness of our field of inquiry. In spite of their position at one of the extremities of the empire, a position which would seemingly render them peculiarly receptive to alien ideas from foreign lands, the people of Weihaiwei remain on the whole steadfastly loyal to the views of life and conduct which are, or were till recently, recognised as typically Chinese. Indeed, not only do we find here most of the religious ideas, superstitious notions and social practices which are still a living force in more centrally-situated parts of the Empire, but we may also discover strange instances of the survival of immemorial rites and quasi-religious usages which are known to have flourished dim ages ago throughout China, but which in less conservative districts than Weihaiwei have been gradually eliminated and forgotten. One example of this is the queer practice of celebrating marriages between the dead. The reasons for this strange custom must be dealt with later;<sup>1</sup> here it is only desirable to mention the fact that in many other parts of China it appears to have been long extinct. The greatest authority on the religious systems of China, Dr. De Groot, whose erudite volumes should be in the hands of every serious student of Chinese rites and ceremonies, came across no case of "dead-marriage" during his residence in China, and he expressed uncertainty as to whether this custom was still practised.<sup>2</sup> Another religious rite which has died out in many other places and yet survives in Weihaiwei, is that of burying the soul of a dead man (or perhaps it would be more correct to say one of his souls) without his body.<sup>3</sup> Of such burials, which must also be dealt with later on, Dr. De Groot, in spite of all his researches,

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 230 *seq.*, 233 *seq.*

<sup>2</sup> *The Religious System of China*, vol. ii, p. 806.

<sup>3</sup> See pp. 281 *seq.*



seems to have come across no instance, though he confidently expressed the correct belief that somewhere or other they still took place.<sup>1</sup>

As the people of Weihaiwei are so tenacious of old customs and traditions, the reader may ask with what feelings they regard the small foreign community which for the last decade and more has been dwelling in their midst. Is British authority merely regarded as an unavoidable evil, something like a drought or bad harvest? Does British influence have no effect whatever on the evolution of the native character and modes of thought? The last chapter of this book will be found to contain some observations on these matters: but in a general way it may be said that the great mass of the Chinese population of Weihaiwei has been only very slightly, and perhaps transiently, affected by foreign influences. The British community is very small, consisting of a few officials, merchants, and missionaries. With two or three exceptions all the Europeans reside on the island of Liukung and in the small British settlement of Port Edward, where the native population (especially on the island) is to a great extent drawn from the south-eastern provinces of China and from Japan. The European residents—other than officials and missionaries—have few or no dealings with the people except through the medium of their native clerks and servants. The missionaries, it need hardly be said, do not interfere, and of course in no circumstances would be permitted to interfere, with the cherished customs of the people, even those which are branded as the idolatrous rites of “paganism.”

Apart from the missionaries, the officials are the only Europeans who come in direct contact with the people, and it is, and always has been, the settled policy of the local Government not only to leave the people to lead their own lives in their own way, but, when disputes arise between natives, to adjudicate

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* vol. iii, p. 854.

between them in strict conformity with their own ancestral usages. In this the local Government is only acting in obedience to the Order-in-Council under which British rule in Weihaiwei was inaugurated. "In civil cases between natives," says the Order, "the Court shall be guided by Chinese or other native law and custom, so far as any such law or custom is not repugnant to justice and morality." The treatment accorded to the people of Weihaiwei in this respect is, indeed, no different from that accorded to other subject races of the Empire; but whereas, in other colonies and protectorates, commercial or economic interests or political considerations have generally made it necessary to introduce a body of English-made law which to a great extent annuls or transforms the native traditions and customary law, the circumstances of Weihaiwei have not yet made it necessary to introduce more than a very slender body of legislative enactments, hardly any of which run counter to or modify Chinese theory or local practice.

From the point of view of the European student of Chinese life and manners the conditions thus existing in Weihaiwei are highly advantageous. Nowhere else can "Old China" be studied in pleasanter or more suitable surroundings than here. The theories of "Young China," which are destined to improve so much of the bad and to spoil so much of the good elements in the political and social systems of the Empire, have not yet had any deeply-marked influence on the minds of this industrious population of simple-minded farmers. The Government official in Weihaiwei, whose duties throw him into immediate contact with the natives, and who in a combined magisterial and executive capacity is obliged to acquaint himself with the multitudinous details of their daily life, has a unique opportunity for acquiring an insight into the actual working of the social machine and the complexities of Chinese character.



This satisfactory state of things cannot be regarded as permanent, even if the foreigner himself does not soon become a mere memory. If Weihaiwei were to undergo development as a commercial or industrial centre, present conditions would be greatly modified. Not only would the people themselves pass through a startling change in manners and disposition—a change more or less rapid and fundamental according to the manner in which the new conditions affected the ordinary life of the villagers—but their foreign rulers would, in a great measure, lose the opportunities which they now possess of acquiring first-hand knowledge of the people and their ancestral customs. Government departments and officials would be multiplied in order to cope with the necessary increase of routine work, the executive and judicial functions would be carefully separated, and the individual civil servant would become a mere member or mouthpiece of a single department, instead of uniting in his own person—as he does at present—half a dozen different executive functions and wide discretionary powers with regard to general administration. Losing thereby a great part of his personal influence and prestige, he would tend to be regarded more and more as the salaried servant of the public, less and less as a recognisable representative of the *fu-mu-kuan* (the “father-and-mother official”) of the time-honoured administrative system of China. That these results would assuredly be brought about by any great change in the economic position of Weihaiwei cannot be doubted, since similar causes have produced such results in nearly all the foreign and especially the Asiatic possessions of the British Crown.

But there are other forces at work besides those that may come from foreign commercial or industrial enterprise, whereby Weihaiwei may become a far less desirable school than it is at present for the student of the Chinese social organism. Hitherto Weihaiwei has with considerable success protected



itself behind walls of conservatism and obedience to tradition against the onslaughts of what a Confucian archbishop, if such a dignitary existed, might denounce as "Modernism." But those walls, however substantial they may appear to the casual eye, are beginning to show signs of decay. There is indeed no part of China, or perhaps it would be truer to say no section of the Chinese people, that is totally unaffected at the present day by the modern spirit of change and reform. It is naturally the most highly educated of the people who are the most quickly influenced and roused to action, and the people of Weihaiwei, as it happens, are, with comparatively few exceptions, almost illiterate. But the spirit of change is "in the air," and reveals itself in cottage-homes as well as in books and newspapers and the market-places of great cities. Let us hope, for the good of China, that the stout walls of conservatism both in Weihaiwei and elsewhere will not be battered down too soon or too suddenly.

One of the gravest dangers overhanging China at the present day is the threatened triumph of mere theory over the results of accumulated experience. Multitudes of the ardent young reformers of to-day—not unlike some of the early dreamers of the French Revolution—are aiming at the destruction of all the doctrines that have guided the political and social life of their country for three thousand years, and hope to build up a strong and progressive China on a foundation of abstract principles. With the hot-headed enthusiasm of youth they speak lightly of the impending overthrow, not only of the decaying forces of Buddhism and Taoism, but also of the great politico-social structure of Confucianism, heedless of the possibility that these may drag with them to destruction all that is good and sound in Chinese life and thought. Buddhism (in its present Chinese form) might, indeed, be extinguished without much loss to the people; Taoism (such as it is nowadays)

might vanish absolutely and for ever, leaving perhaps no greater sense of loss than was left by the decay of a belief in witchcraft and alchemy among ourselves; but Confucianism (or rather the principles and doctrines which Confucianism connotes, for the system dates from an age long anterior to that of Confucius) cannot be annihilated without perhaps irreparable injury to the body-social and body-politic of China. The collapse of Confucianism would undoubtedly involve, for example, the partial or total ruin of the Chinese family system and the cult of ancestors.

With the exception of Roman Catholics and the older generation of Protestant missionaries with a good many of their successors, who condemn all Chinese religion as false or "idolatrous," few, if any, European students of China will be heard to disapprove—whether on ethical or religious grounds—of that keystone of the Chinese social edifice known to Europeans as ancestor-worship. To the revolutionary doctrines of the extreme reformers Weihaiwei and other "backward" and conservative parts of China are—half unconsciously—opposing a salutary bulwark. They cannot hope to keep change and reform altogether at a distance, nor is it at all desirable that they should do so; indeed, as we have seen, their walls of conservatism are already beginning to crumble. But if they only succeed in keeping the old flag flying until the attacking party has been sobered down by time and experience and has become less anxious to sweep away all the time-honoured bases of morality and social government, these old centres of conservatism will have deserved the gratitude of their country. What indeed could be more fitting than that the Confucian system should find its strongest support, and perhaps make its last fight for life, in the very province in which the national sage lived and taught, and where his body has lain buried for twenty-five centuries?



## CHAPTER II

### WEIHAIWEI AND THE SHANTUNG PROMONTORY

As applied to the territory leased by China to Great Britain the word Weihaiwei is in certain respects a misnomer. The European reader should understand that the name is composed of three separate Chinese characters, each of which has a meaning of its own.<sup>1</sup> The first of the three characters (transliterated *Wei* in Roman letters) is not the same as the third: the pronunciation is the same but the "tone" is different, and the Chinese symbols for the two words are quite distinct. The first *Wei* is a word meaning Terrible, Majestic, or Imposing, according to its context or combinations. The word *hai* means the Sea. The combined words Wei-hai Ch'êng or Weihai City, which is the real name of the little town that stands on the mainland opposite the island of Liukung, might be roughly explained as meaning "City of the August Ocean," but in the case of Chinese place-names, as of personal names, translations are always unnecessary and often meaningless. The third character, *Wei*, signifies a Guard or Protection; but in a technical sense, as applied to the names of places, it denotes a certain kind of garrisoned and fortified post partially exempted from civil jurisdiction and established for the protection of the coast from piratical raids, or for

<sup>1</sup> The three characters in question are depicted on the binding of this book.



guarding the highways along which tribute-grain and public funds are carried through the provinces to the capital.

A *Wei* is more than a mere fort or even a fortified town. It often implies the existence of a military colony and lands held by military tenure, and may embrace an area of some scores of square miles. Perhaps the best translation of the term would be "Military District." The Wei of Weihai was only one of several Wei established along the coast of Shantung, and like them it owed its creation chiefly to the piratical attacks of the Japanese. More remains to be said on this point in the next chapter; here it will be enough to say that the Military District of Weihai was established in 1398 and was abolished in 1735. From that time up to the date of the Japanese occupation in 1895 it formed part of the magisterial (civil) district of Wên-têng, though this does not mean that the forts were dismantled or the place left without troops. In strictness, therefore, we should speak not of Weihaiwei but of Weihai, which would have the advantage of brevity: though as the old name is used quite as much by the Chinese as by ourselves there is no urgent necessity for a change. But in yet another respect the name is erroneous, for the territory leased to Great Britain, though much larger than that assigned to the ancient Wei, does not include the walled city which gives its name to the whole. The Territory, however, embraces not only all that the Wei included except the city, but also a considerable slice of the districts of Wên-têng and Jung-ch'êng. It should therefore be understood that the Weihaiwei with which these pages deal is not merely the small area comprised in the old Chinese Wei, but the three hundred square miles (nearly) of territory ruled since 1898 by Great Britain. We shall have cause also to make an occasional excursion into the much larger area (comprising perhaps a thousand square miles) over which Great Britain has certain

vague military rights but within which she has no civil jurisdiction.

A glance at a map of eastern Shantung will show the position of the Weihaiwei Territory (for such is its official designation under the British administration) with regard to the cities of Wên-têng (south), Jung-ch'êng (east), and Ning-hai (west). Starting from the most easterly point in the Province, the Shantung Promontory, and proceeding westwards towards Weihaiwei, we find that the Jung-ch'êng district embraces all the country lying eastward of the Territory; under the Chinese *régime* it also included all that portion of what is at present British territory which lies east of a line drawn from the sea near the village of Shêng-tzũ to the British frontier south of the village of Ch'iao-t'ou. All the rest of the Territory falls within the Chinese district of which Wên-têng is the capital. Jung-ch'êng city is situated five miles from the eastern British frontier, Wên-têng city about six miles from the southern. The magisterial district of Ning-hai has its headquarters in a city that lies over thirty miles west of the British western boundary. The official Chinese distances from Weihaiwei city to the principal places of importance in the neighbourhood are these: to Ning-hai, 120 *li*; to Wên-têng, 100 *li*; to Jung-ch'êng, 110 *li*. A *li* is somewhat variable, but is generally regarded as equivalent to about a third of an English mile. The distance to Chinan, the capital of the Shantung Province, is reckoned at 1,350 *li*, and to Peking (by road) 2,300 *li*.<sup>1</sup>

The mention of magisterial districts makes it desirable to explain, for the benefit of readers whose

<sup>1</sup> The following list of distances by sea to the principal neighbouring ports may be of interest. The distance is in each case reckoned from the Weihaiwei harbour. *Shantung Promontory*, 30 miles; *Chefoo*, 42 miles; *Port Arthur*, 89 miles; *Dalny*, 91 miles; *Chemulpo*, 232 miles; *Taku*, 234 miles; *Shanghai*, 452 miles; *Kiaochou*, 194 miles; *Nagasaki*, 510 miles.



knowledge of China is limited, that every Province (there are at present eighteen Provinces in China excluding Chinese Turkestan and the Manchurian Provinces) is subdivided for administrative purposes into *Fu* and *Hsien*, words generally translated by the terms Prefecture and District-Magistracy. The prefects and magistrates are the *fu-mu-kuan* or Father-and-mother officials; that is, it is they who are the direct rulers of the people, are supposed to know their wants, to be always ready to listen to their complaints and relieve their necessities, and to love them as if the relationship were in reality that of parent and children. That a Chinese magistrate has often very queer ways of showing his paternal affection is a matter which need not concern us here. In the eyes of the people the *fu-mu-kuan* is the living embodiment of imperial as well as merely patriarchal authority, and in the eyes of the higher rulers of the Province he is the official representative of the thousands of families over whom his jurisdiction extends. The father-and-mother official is in short looked up to by the people as representing the Emperor, the august Head of all the heads of families, the Universal Patriarch; he is looked down to by his superiors as representing all the families to whom he stands *in loco parentis*.<sup>1</sup> A district magistrate is subordinate to a prefect, for there are several magistracies in each prefecture, but both are addressed as *Ta lao-yeh*. This term—a very appropriate one for an official who represents the patriarchal idea—may be literally rendered Great Old Parent or Grandfather; whereas the more exalted provincial officials, who are regarded less as parents of the people than as Servants of the Emperor, are known as *Ta-jên*: a term which, literally meaning Great Man, is often but

<sup>1</sup> "The magistrate is the unit of government; he is the backbone of the whole official system; and to ninety per cent. of the population he is *the Government*."—Byron Brenan's *Office of District Magistrate in China*.



not always appropriately regarded as equivalent to "Excellency."

All the district-magistracies mentioned in connexion with Weihaiwei are subordinate to a single prefecture. The headquarters of the prefect, who presides over a tract of country several thousand square miles in extent, are at the city of Têng-chou, situated on the north coast of Shantung 330 *li* or about 110 miles by road west of Weihaiwei. The total number of prefectures (*fu*) in Shantung is ten, of magistracies one hundred and seven. As Shantung itself is estimated to contain 56,000 square miles of territory,<sup>1</sup> the average size of each of the Shantung prefectures may be put down at 5,600 and that of each of the magistracies at about 520 square miles. The British territory of Weihaiwei being rather less than 300 square miles in extent is equivalent in area to a small-sized district-magistracy. The functions of a Chinese district magistrate have been described by some Europeans as somewhat analogous to those of an English mayor, but the analogy is very misleading. Not only has the district magistrate greater powers and responsibilities than the average mayor, but he presides over a far larger area. He is chief civil officer not only within the walls of the district capital but also throughout an extensive tract of country that is often rich and populous and full of towns and villages.

The eastern part of the Shantung Peninsula, in which Weihaiwei and the neighbouring districts of Jung-ch'êng, Wên-têng and Ning-hai are situated, is neither rich nor populous as compared with the south-western parts of the Province. The land is not unfertile, but the agricultural area is somewhat small, for the country is very hilly. Like the greater part of north China, Shantung is liable to floods and droughts, and local famines are not uncommon. The unequal

<sup>1</sup> England and Wales contain 58,000 square miles, with a population perhaps slightly less than that of Shantung.

distribution of the rainfall is no doubt partly the result of the almost total absence of forest. Forestation is and always has been a totally neglected art in China, and the wanton manner in which timber has been wasted and destroyed without any serious attempt at replacement is one of the most serious blots on Chinese administration, as well as one of the chief causes of the poverty of the people.<sup>1</sup> If north China is to be saved from becoming a desert (for the arable land in certain districts is undoubtedly diminishing in quantity year by year) it will become urgently necessary for the Government to undertake forestation on a large scale and to spend money liberally in protecting the young forests from the cupidity of the ignorant peasants. The German Government in Kiaochou is doing most valuable work in the reforestation of the hills that lie within its jurisdiction, and to a very modest extent Weihaiwei is acting similarly. Perhaps the most encouraging sign is the genuine interest that the Chinese are beginning to take in these experiments, though it is difficult to make them realise the enormous economic and climatic advantages which forestation on a large scale would bring to their country.

It must have been the treelessness of the district and the waterless condition of the mountains as viewed from the harbour and the sea-coast that prompted the remark made in an official report some years ago that Weihaiwei is "a colder Aden"; and indeed if we contemplate the coast-line from the deck of a steamer the description seems apt enough. A ramble through the Territory among the valleys and glens that penetrate the interior in every direction is bound to modify one's first cheerless impressions very considerably. Trees, it is true, are abundant only in the immediate

<sup>1</sup> As early as the seventh century B.C. deforestation had become a recognised evil in the State of Ch'i (part of the modern Shantung), chiefly owing to the lavish use of timber for coffins and grave-vaults. (See De Groot's *Religious System of China*, vol. ii. pp. 660-1.)



neighbourhood of villages and in the numerous family burial-grounds ; but the streams are often lined with graceful willows, and large areas on the mountain-slopes are covered with green vegetation in the shape of scrub-oak. At certain seasons of the year the want of trees is from an æsthetic point of view partly atoned for by the blended tints of the growing crops ; and certainly to the average English eye the waving wheat-fields and the harvesters moving sickle in hand through the yellow grain offer a fairer and more home-like spectacle than is afforded by the marshy rice-lands of the southern provinces. On the whole, indeed, the scenery of Weihaiwei is picturesque and in some places beautiful.<sup>1</sup> The chief drawback next to lack of forest is the want of running water. The streams are only brooks that can be crossed by stepping-stones. In July and August, when the rainfall is greatest, they become enormously swollen for a few days, but their courses are short and the flood-waters are soon carried down to the sea. In winter and spring some of the streams wholly disappear, and the greatest of them becomes the merest rivulet.

The traveller who approaches Weihaiwei by sea from the east or south makes his first acquaintance with the Shantung coast at a point about thirty miles (by sea) east of the Weihaiwei harbour. This is the Shantung Promontory, the Chinese name of which is Ch'êng Shan Tsui or Ch'êng Shan T'ou. Ch'êng Shan is the name of the hill which forms the Promontory, while *Tsui* and *T'ou* (literally Mouth and Head) mean Cape or Headland. Before the Jung-ch'êng magistracy was founded (in 1735) this extreme eastern region was a military district like Weihaiwei. Taking its name from the Promontory, it was known as Ch'êng-

<sup>1</sup> Especially some of the sea-beaches, the defiles that lie between Yü-chia-k'uang and Shang Chuang, and the valleys in which are situated Ch'i-k'uang, Wang-chia-k'uang, Pei k'ou, Chang-chia-shan, and Ch'ien Li-k'ou.





THE MANG-TAO TREE (see p. 384).

p. 18]



A HALT IN YÜ-CHIA-K'UANG DEFILE (see p. 18).





shan-wei. Ch'êng Shan, with all the rest of the present Jun-ch'êng district, is within the British "sphere of influence"; that is to say, Great Britain has the right to erect fortifications there and to station troops: rights which, it may be mentioned, have never been exercised.

The Shantung Promontory has been the scene of innumerable shipwrecks, for the sea there is apt to be rough, fogs are not uncommon, and there are many dangerous rocks. The first lighthouse—a primitive affair—is said to have been erected in 1821 by a pious person named Hsü Fu-ch'ang; but long before that a guild of merchants used to light a great beacon fire every night on a conspicuous part of the hill. A large bell was struck, so the records state, when the weather was foggy. The present lighthouse is a modern structure under the charge of the Chinese Imperial Customs authorities. Behind the Promontory—that is, to the west (landward) side—there is a wide stretch of comparatively flat land which extends across the peninsula. It may be worth noting that an official of the Ming dynasty named T'ien Shih-lung actually recommended in a state paper that a canal should be cut through this neck of land so as to enable junks to escape the perils of the rock-bound Promontory. He pointed out that the land was level and sandy and that several ponds already existed which could be utilised in the construction of the canal. Thus, he said, could be avoided the great dangers of the rocks known as Shih Huang Ch'iao and Wo Lung Shih. The advice of the amateur engineer was not acted upon, but his memorial (perhaps on account of its literary style) was carefully preserved and has been printed in the Chinese annals of the Jung-ch'êng district.

These annals contain an interesting reference to one of the two groups of rocks just named. Wo Lung Shih means "Sleeping dragon rocks," and no particular legend appears to be attached to them, though it



would have been easy to invent one. But the Shih Huang Ch'iao, or Bridge of the First Emperor, is regarded by the people as a permanent memorial of that distinguished monarch who in the third century B.C. seized the tottering throne of the classic Chou dynasty and established himself as the First Emperor (for such is the title he gave himself) of a united China. Most Europeans know nothing of this remarkable man except that he built the Great Wall of China and rendered his reign infamous by the Burning of the Books and the slaughter of the scholars. Whether his main object in the latter proceeding was to stamp out all memory of the acts of former dynasties so that to succeeding ages he might indeed be the First of the historical Emperors, or whether it was not rather an act of savagery such as might have been expected of one who was not "born in the purple" and who derived his notions of civilisation from the semi-barbarous far-western state of Ch'in, is perhaps an impossible question to decide: and indeed the hatred of the Chinese *literati* for a sovereign who despised literature and art may possibly have led them to be guilty of some exaggeration in the accounts they have given us of his acts of vandalism and murder.

During his short reign as Emperor, Ch'in Shih Huang-ti (who died in 210 B.C.) is said to have travelled through the Empire to an extent that was only surpassed by the shadowy Emperor Yü who lived in the third millennium B.C. Yü was, according to tradition, the prince of engineers. He it was who "drained the Empire" and led the rivers into their proper and appropriate channels. The First Emperor might be said, had he not affected contempt for all who went before him, to have taken the great Yü as his model, for he too left a reputation of an ambitious if not altogether successful engineer. The story goes that he travelled all the way to the easternmost point of Shantung, and having arrived at the Promontory, decided to build a bridge from there to Korea, or to

the mysterious islands of P'êng-lai where the herb of immortality grew, or to the equally marvellous region of Fu-sang.

The case of the First Emperor affords a good example of how wild myths can be built up on a slender substratum of fact. Had he lived a few centuries earlier instead of in historic times, his name doubtless would have come down the ages as that of a demi-god; even as things are, the legends that sprang up about him in various parts of northern China might well be connected with the name of some prehistoric hero. The Chinese of eastern Shantung have less to say of him as a monarch than as a mighty magician. In order to have continuous daylight for building the Great Wall, he is said to have been inspired with the happy device of transfixing the sun with a needle, thus preventing it from moving. His idea of bridge-building had the simplicity of genius: it was simply to pick up the neighbouring mountains and throw them into the sea. He was not without valuable assistance from persons who possessed powers even more remarkable than his own. A certain spirit helped him by summoning a number of hills to contribute their building-stone. At the spirit's summons, so the story goes, thirteen hills obediently sent their stones rolling down eastwards towards the sea. On came the boulders, big and little, one after another, just as if they were so many live things walking. When they went too slowly or showed signs of laziness the spirit flogged them with a whip *until the blood came*.

The truth of this story, in the opinion of the people, is sufficiently attested by the facts that one of the mountains is still known as Chao-shih-shan or "Summon-the-rocks hill," and that many of the stones on its slopes and at its base are reddish in hue.<sup>1</sup> The Emperor was also helped by certain Spirits of the Ocean (*hai-shên*), who did useful work in establishing

<sup>1</sup> The story is quoted in the *T'ai P'ing Huan Yü Chi* (*chüan* 20).



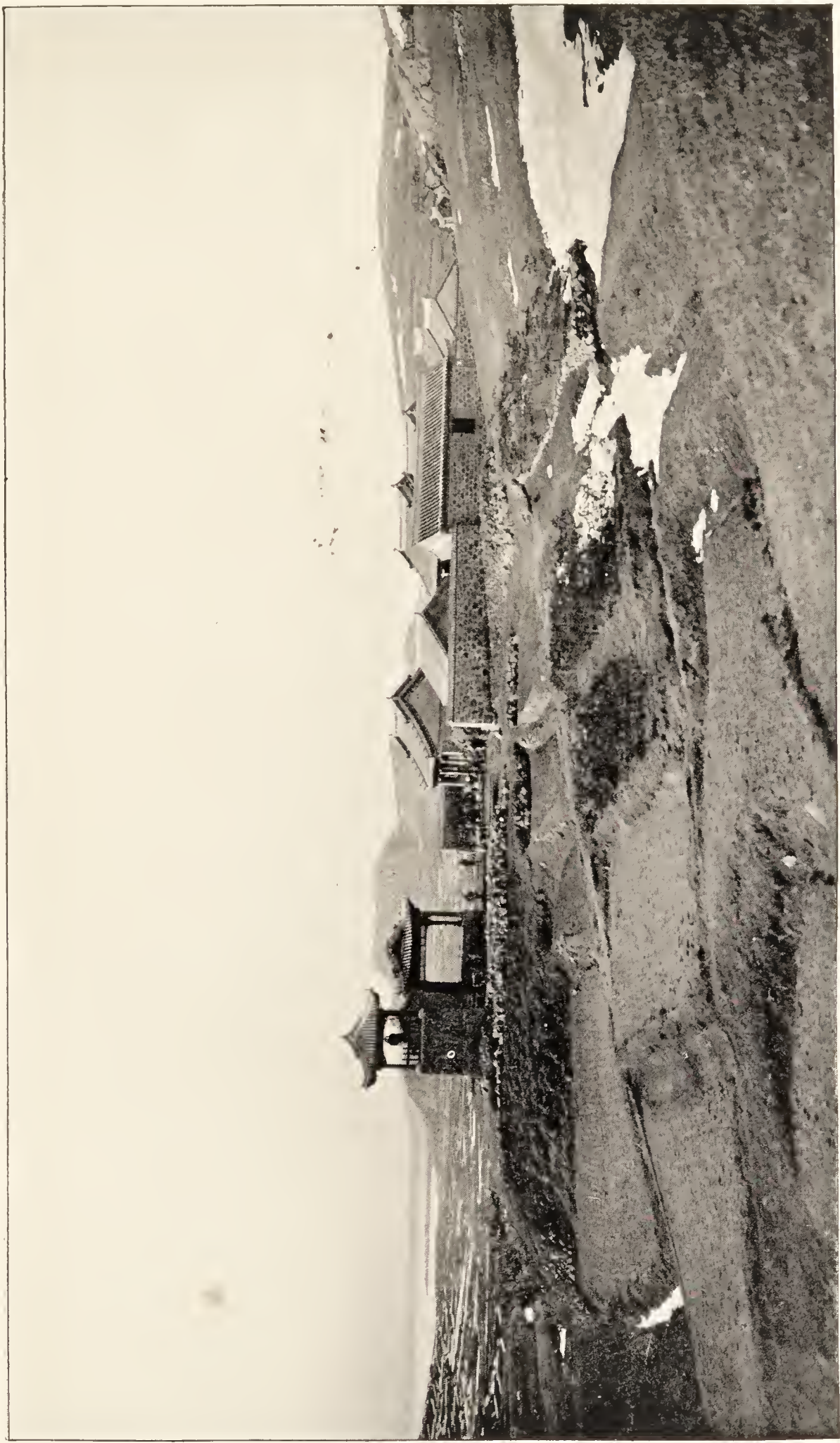
the piers of his bridge in deep water.<sup>1</sup> The Emperor, according to the story, was deeply grateful to these Ocean Spirits for their assistance, and begged for a personal interview with them so that he might express his thanks in proper form. "We are horribly ugly," replied the modest Spirits, "and you must not pay us a visit unless you will promise not to draw pictures of us." The Emperor promised, and rode along the bridge to pay his visit. When he had gone a distance of forty *li* he was met by the Spirits, who received him with due ceremony. During the interview, the Emperor, who like Odysseus was a man of many wiles, furtively drew his hosts' portraits on the ground with his foot. As luck would have it the Spirits discovered what he was doing, and naturally became highly indignant. "Your Majesty has broken faith with us," they said. "Begone!" The Emperor mounted his horse and tried to ride back the way he had come, but lo! the animal remained rigid and immovable, for the Spirits had bewitched it and turned it into a rock; and his Majesty had to go all the way back to the shore on foot.<sup>2</sup>

This regrettable incident did not cause the cessation of work on the bridge, though the Emperor presumably received no more help from the Spirits of the Ocean. But on one unlucky day the Emperor's wife presumed without invitation to pay her industrious husband a visit, and brought with her such savoury dishes as she thought would tempt the imperial appetite. Now the presence of women, say the Chinese, is utterly destructive of all magical influences. The alchemists, for example, cannot compound the elixir of life in the presence of women, chickens, or cats. The lady had no sooner made

<sup>1</sup> With regard to this assistance from spirits, cf. the Jewish legend that King Solomon by the aid of a magic ring controlled the demons and compelled them to give their help in the building of the great Temple.

<sup>2</sup> See *T'ai P'ing Huan Yü Chi*, *loc. cit.*





THE TEMPLE AT THE SHANTUNG PROMONTORY (see p. 23).





her appearance at Ch'êng Shan than the bridge, which was all but finished, instantaneously crumbled to pieces. So furious was her imperial spouse at the ruin of his work that he immediately tore the unhappy dame to pieces and scattered her limbs over the sea-shore, where they can be seen in rock-form to this day. The treacherous rocks that stretch out seawards in a line from the Promontory are the ruins of the famous bridge, and still bear the name of the imperial magician.

Legends say that a successor of the First Emperor, namely Han Wu Ti (140-87 B.C.), who also made a journey to eastern Shantung, was ill-advised enough to make an attempt to continue the construction of the mythical bridge; but he only went so far as to set up two great pillars. These are still to be seen at ebb-tide, though the uninitiated would take them to be mere shapeless rocks. Han Wu Ti's exploits were but a faint copy of those of the First Emperor. Ch'êng Shan Tsui has for many centuries been dedicated to that ruler's memory, and on its slopes his temple may still be visited. The original temple, we are told, was built out of part of the ruins of the great bridge. In 1512 it was destroyed by fire and rebuilt on a smaller scale. Since then it has been restored more than once, and the present building is comparatively new.

There is no legend, apparently, which associates the First Emperor with the territory at present directly administered by Great Britain, but there is a foolish story that connects him with Wên-têng Shan, a hill from which the Wên-têng district takes its name. It is said that having arrived at this hill the Emperor summoned his civil officials (*wên*) to ascend (*têng*) the hill in question and there proclaim to a marvelling world his own great exploits and virtues; but this story is evidently a late invention to account for the name Wên-têng. Among other localities associated with this Emperor may be mentioned a terrace, which he visited for the sake of a sea-view, and a pond



(near Jung-ch'êng city) at which His Majesty's horses were watered: hence the name *Yin-ma-ch'ih* (Drink-horse-pool). But the Chinese are always ready to invent stories to suit place-names, and seeing that every Chinese syllable (whether part of a name or not) has several meanings, the strain on the imaginative faculties is not severe.

The feat performed by the Emperor close to the modern treaty-port of Chefoo—only a couple of hours' steaming from Weihaiwei—may be slightly more worthy of record than the Wên-têng legend. His first visit to Chih-fu (Chefoo) Hill—by which is meant one of the islands off the coast—is said to have taken place in 218 B.C., when he left a record of himself in a rock-inscription which—if it ever existed—has doubtless long ago disappeared. In 210, the last year of his busy life, he sent a certain Hsü Fu to gather medicinal herbs (or rather the herbs out of which the drug of immortality was made) at the Chefoo Hill. In his journeys across the waters to and from the hill Hsü Fu was much harassed by the attacks of a mighty fish, and gave his imperial master a full account of the perils which constantly menaced him owing to this monster's disagreeable attentions. The Emperor, always ready for an adventure, immediately started for Chefoo, climbed the hill, caught sight of the great fish wallowing in the waters, and promptly shot it dead with his bow and arrow.

It is natural that the Shantung Promontory and the eastern peninsula in general should have become the centre of legend and myth. We know from classical tradition that to the people of Europe the western ocean—the Atlantic—was a region of marvel. There—beyond the ken of ships made or manned by ordinary mortals—lay the Fortunate Islands, the Isles of the Blest. The Chinese have similar legends, but their Fairy Isles—P'êng-lai and Fu-sang—lay, as a matter of course, somewhere in the undiscovered east, about the shimmering region of the rising sun. Many and

many are the Chinese dreamers and poets who have yearned for those islands, and have longed to pluck the wondrous fruit that ripened only once in three thousand years and then imparted a golden lustre to him who tasted of it. The Shantung Promontory became a region of marvel because it formed the borderland between the known and the unknown, the stepping-stone from the realm of prosaic fact to that of fancy and romance.

The coast-line from the Promontory to Weihaiwei possesses no features of outstanding interest. It consists of long sandy beaches broken by occasional rocks and cliffs. The villages are small and, from the sea, almost invisible. Undulating hills, seldom rising above a thousand feet in height, but sometimes bold and rugged in outline, form a pleasant background. There are a few islets, of which one of the most conspicuous is Chi-ming-tao—"Cock-crow Island"—lying ten miles from the most easterly point of the Weihaiwei harbour. All the mainland from here onwards lies within the territory directly ruled by Great Britain. On the port side of the steamer as she enters the harbour will be seen a line of low cliffs crowned by a lighthouse; on the starboard side lies Liukungtao, the island of Liukung.

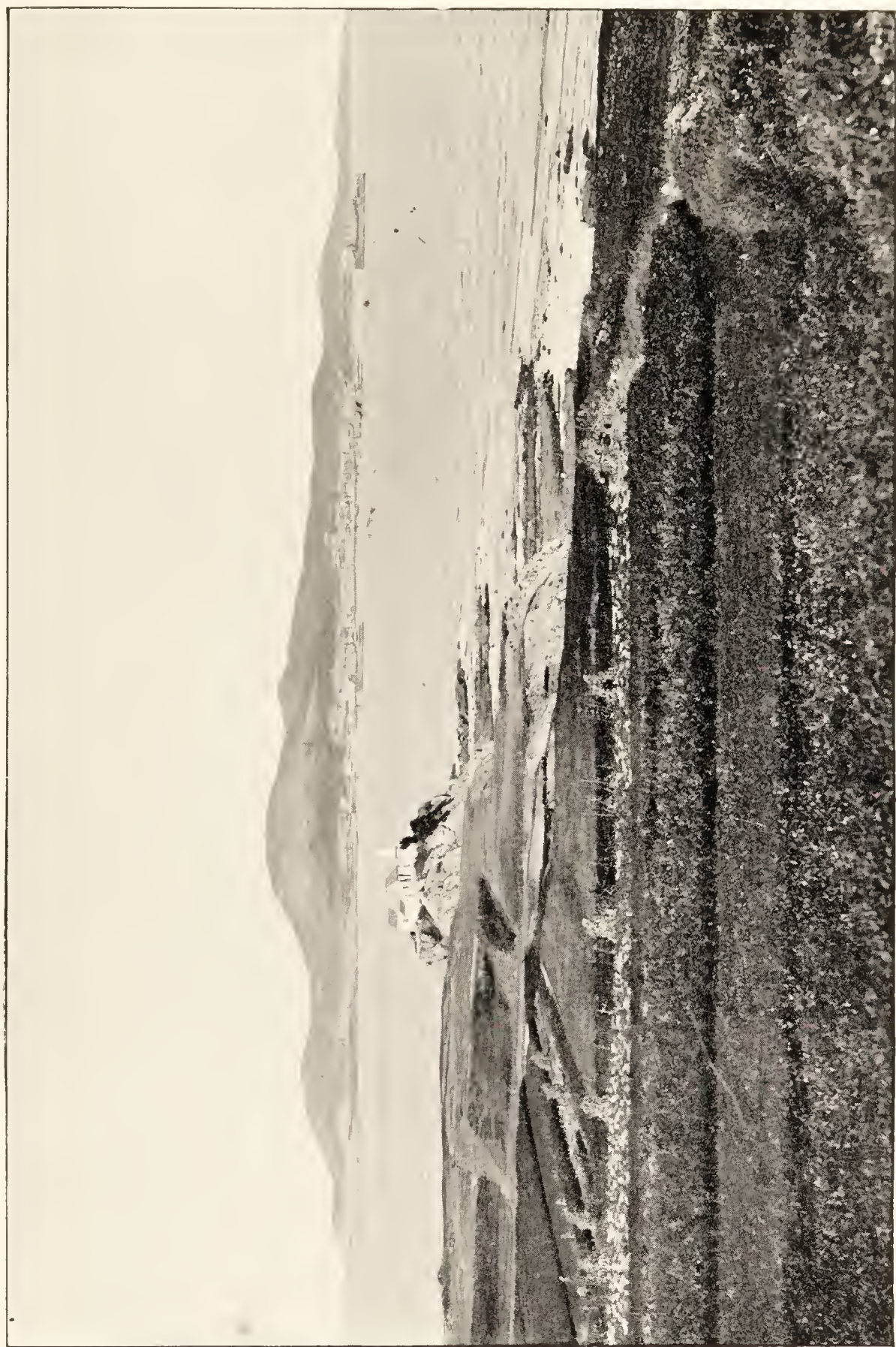
As in the case of Hongkong, it is the island that creates the harbour; and, similarly, the position of the island provides two entrances available at all times for the largest ships. The island is two and a quarter miles long and has a maximum breadth of seven-eighths of a mile and a circumference of five and a half miles. The eastern harbour entrance is two miles broad, the western entrance only three-quarters of a mile. The total superficial area of the harbour is estimated at eleven square miles. Under the lee of the island, which might be described as a miniature Hongkong, is the deep-water anchorage for warships, and it is here that the British China Squadron lies when it pays its



annual summer visit to north China. On the island are situated the headquarters of the permanent naval establishment, the naval canteen (formerly a picturesque Chinese official *yamên*), a United Services club, a few bungalows for summer visitors, an hotel, the offices of a few shipping firms, and several streets of shops kept chiefly by natives of south China and by Japanese. There are also the usual recreation-grounds, tennis-courts, and golf-links, without which no British colony would be able to exist. The whole island practically consists of one hill, which rises to a point (the Signal Station) 498 feet above sea-level. On the seaward side it ends precipitously in a fringe of broken cliffs, while on the landward side its gentle slopes are covered with streets and houses and open spaces.

The name Liukungtao means the Island of Mr. Liu, and the records refer to it variously as Liu-chia-tao (the Island of the Liu family), as Liutao (Liu Island), and as Liukungtao. Who Mr. Liu was and when he lived is a matter of uncertainty, upon which the local Chinese chronicles have very little to tell us. "Tradition says," so writes the chronicler, "that the original Mr. Liu lived a very long time ago, but no one knows when." The principal habitation of the family is said to have been not on the island but at a village called Shih-lo-ts'un on the mainland. This village was situated somewhere to the south of the walled city. The family must have been a wealthy one, for it appears to have owned the island and made of it a summer residence or "retreat." It was while residing at Shih-lo-ts'un that one of the Liu family made a very remarkable discovery. On the sea-shore he came across a gigantic decayed fish with a bone measuring one hundred *chang* in length. According to English measurement this monstrous creature must have been no less than three hundred and ninety yards long. Liu had the mighty fish-bone carried to a temple in the neighbouring walled city, and there it





*Photo by Ah Fong.*

WEIHAIVEI HARBOUR, LIUKUNGTAO AND CHU-TAO LIGHTHOUSE.





was reverently presented to the presiding deity. The only way to get the bone into the temple was to cut it up into shorter lengths. This was done, and the various pieces were utilised as subsidiary rafters for portions of the temple roof. They are still in existence, as any inquirer may see for himself by visiting the Kuan Ti temple in Weihaiwei city. Perhaps if Europeans insist upon depriving China of the honour of having invented the mariner's compass they may be willing to leave her the distinction of having discovered the first sea-serpent.<sup>1</sup>

From time immemorial there existed on the island a temple which contained two images representing an elderly gentleman and his wife. These were Liu Kung and Liu Mu—Father and Mother Liu. They afford a good example of how quite undistinguished men and women can in favourable circumstances attain the position of local deities or saints : for the persons represented by these two images have been regularly worshipped—especially by sailors—for several centuries. The curious thing is that the deification of the old couple has taken place without any apparent justification from legend or myth. Perhaps they were a benevolent pair who were in the habit of ministering to the wants of shipwrecked sailors ; but if so there is no testimony to that effect. When the British Government acquired the island and began to make preparations for the construction of naval works and forts, which were never completed, the Chinese decided to remove the venerated images of Father and Mother Liu to the mainland. They are now handsomely housed in a new temple that stands between the walled city and the European settlement of Port Edward, and it is still the custom for many of the local junkmen to come here and make their pious offerings of money and incense, believing that in return for these gifts old Liu and his wife will

<sup>1</sup> For accounts of other appearances of the "sea-serpent" in Chinese waters, see Dennys's *Folk-lore of China*, pp. 109, 113-4.

graciously grant them good fortune at sea and freedom from storm and shipwreck.

It is on the island that the majority of the British residents dwell, but Liukungtao does not occupy with respect to the mainland the same all-important and dominating position that Hongkong occupies (or did till recently occupy) with regard to the Kowloon peninsula and the New Territory. The seat of the British Government of Weihaiwei is on the mainland, and the small group of civil officers are far more busily employed in connexion with the administration of that part of the Territory and its 150,000 villagers than with the little island and its few British residents and native shopkeepers. The British administrative centre, then, is the village of Ma-t'ou, which before the arrival of the British was the port of the walled city of Weihaiwei, but is gradually becoming more and more European in appearance and has been appropriately re-named Port Edward. It lies snugly on the south-west side of the harbour and is well sheltered from storms; the water in the vicinity of Port Edward is, however, too shallow for vessels larger than sea-going junks and small coasting-steamers. Ferry-launches run several times daily between the island and the mainland, the distance between the two piers being two and a half miles. Government House, the residence of the British Commissioner, is situated on a slight eminence overlooking the village, and not far off are situated the Government Offices and the buildings occupied, until 1906, by the officers and men of the 1st Chinese Regiment of Infantry. At the northern end of the village, well situated on a bluff overlooking the sea, is a large hotel: far from beautiful in outward appearance, but comfortable and well managed. A little further off stands the Weihaiwei School for European boys. It would be difficult anywhere in Asia to find a healthier place for a school, and certainly on the coast of China the site is peerless.





IMAGES OF "MR. AND MRS. LIU" (see p. 27).





Elsewhere in the neighbourhood of Port Edward there are well-situated bungalows for European summer visitors, natural sulphur baths well managed by Japanese, and a small golf course. Other attractions for Europeans are not wanting, but as these pages are not written for the purpose either of eulogising British enterprise or of attracting British visitors, detailed reference to them is unnecessary.

It may be mentioned, however, that from the European point of view, the most pleasing feature of Port Edward and its neighbourhood is the absence of any large and congested centre of Chinese population. The city of Weihaiwei is indeed close by—only half a mile from the main street of Port Edward. But it is a city only in name, for though it possesses a battle-mented wall and imposing gates, it contains only a few quiet streets, three or four temples, an official *yamên*, wide open spaces which are a favourite resort of snipe, and a population of about two thousand.

The reader may remember that when the New Territory was added to the Colony of Hongkong in 1898 a clause in the treaty provided that the walled city of Kowloon, though completely surrounded by British territory, should be left under Chinese rule. This arrangement was due merely to the strong sentimental objection of the Chinese to surrendering a walled city. In the case of Kowloon, as it happened, circumstances soon made it necessary for this part of the treaty to be annulled, and very soon after the New Territory had passed into British hands the Union Jack was hoisted also on the walls of Kowloon. When the territory of Weihaiwei was "leased" to Great Britain in the same eventful year (1898) a somewhat similar agreement was made "that within the walled city of Weihaiwei Chinese officials shall continue to exercise jurisdiction, except so far as may be inconsistent with naval and military requirements for the defence of the territory leased." So correct has been the attitude of the Chinese officials since the

Weihaiwei Convention was signed that it has never been found necessary to raise any question as to the status of the little walled town.

Nominally it is ruled by the Wên-têng magistrate, whose resident delegate is a *hsün-chien* or sub-district deputy magistrate;<sup>1</sup> but as the *hsün-chien* has no authority an inch beyond the city walls, and in practice is perfectly ready to acknowledge British authority in such matters as sanitation (towards the expenses of which he receives a small subsidy from the British Government), it may be easily understood why this *imperium in imperio* has not hitherto led to friction or unpleasantness.

A walk round the well-preserved walls of Weihaiwei city affords a good view of the surroundings of Port Edward and the contour of the sea-coast bordering on the harbour. At the highest point of the city wall stands a little tower called the Huan-ts'ui-lou, the view from which has for centuries past been much praised by the local bards. It was built in the Ming dynasty by a military official named Wang, as a spot from which he might observe the sunrise and enjoy the sea view. From here can be seen, at favourable times, a locally-celebrated mirage (called by the Chinese a "market in the ocean") over and beyond the little islet of Jih-tao or Sun Island, which lies between Liukungtao and the mainland. The view from this tower is very pleasing, though one need not be prepared to endorse the ecstatic words of a sentimental captain from the Wên-têng camp, who closed a little poem of his own with the words "How entrancing is this fair landscape: this must indeed be Fairyland!"

Many of the most conspicuous hills in the northern portion of the Territory can be seen to advantage from the Huan-ts'ui-lou. The small hill immediately behind the city wall and the tower is the Nai-ku-shan.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 53 and 36.

<sup>2</sup> *Shan* is the Chinese word for "Hill."





A VIEW FROM THE WALL OF WEIHAWEI CITY (see p. 31).





Like many other hills in the neighbourhood and along the coast, it possesses the remains of a stone-built beacon-tumulus (*fêng tun*), on which signal fires were lighted in the old days of warfare. To the northward lie Ku-mo Shan, the hill of Yao-yao, and Tiao-wo Shan, all included in the range that bears in the British map the name of Admiral Fitzgerald.

The highest point of the range is described in the local chronicle as "a solitary peak, seldom visited by human foot," though it is nowadays a common objective for European pedestrians, and also, indeed, for active Chinese children. The height is barely one thousand feet above sea-level. Tiao-wo Shan and a neighbouring peak called Sung Ting Shan were resorted to by hundreds of the inhabitants of Weihaiwei as a place of refuge from the bands of robbers and disorganised soldiers who pillaged the homes and fields of the people during the commotions which marked the last year of the Ming dynasty (1643). To the northward of the Huan-ts'ui-lou may be seen a little hill—not far from the European bungalows at Narcissus Bay—crowned with a small stone obelisk of a kind often seen in China and known to foreigners as a Confucian Pencil. This was put up by a graduate of the present dynasty named Hsia Shih-yen and others, as a means of bringing good luck to the neighbourhood, and also, perhaps, as a memorial of their own literary abilities and successes. It bears no inscription.

A loftier hill is Lao-ya Shan, which is or used to be the principal resort of the local officials and people when offering up public supplications for rain. Its name (which means the Hill of the Crows) is derived from the black clouds which as they cluster round the summit are supposed to resemble the gathering of crows. An alternative name is Hsi-yü-ting—the Happy Rain Peak. The highest point in this section of the Territory lies among the imposing range of mountains to the south of Weihaiwei city, and is

known to the Chinese as Fo-erh-ting—"Buddha's Head"—the height of which is about 1,350 feet. This range of hills has been named by the British after Admiral Sir Edward Seymour.

The enumeration of all the hills of so mountainous a district as the Weihaiwei Territory would be useless and of little interest. Some of them, distinguished by miniature temples dedicated to the *Shan-shên* (Spirit of the Hill) and to the Supreme God of Taoism, will be referred to later on.<sup>1</sup> The loftiest hill in the Territory—about 1,700 feet—lies fourteen miles south of Port Edward, and is known to Europeans as Mount Macdonald, and to the Chinese as Chêng-ch'i Shan or Cho-ch'i Shan.<sup>2</sup> The Chinese name is derived from a stone chess-board said to have been carved out of a rock by a *hsien-jên*, a kind of wizard or mountain recluse who lived there in bygone ages. Most of the more remarkable or conspicuous hills in China are believed by the people to have been the abode of weird old men who never came to an end like ordinary people, but went on living with absurdly long beards and a profound knowledge of nature's secrets. There are endless legends about these mysterious beings, many of whom were in fact hermits with a distaste for the commonplace joys of life and a passion for mountain scenery.<sup>3</sup>

On the rocky summit of the Li-k'ou hill (situated in the range of which Fo-erh-ting is the highest point) there is a large stone which is symmetrical in shape and differs in appearance from the surrounding boulders. Legend says that a hermit who cultivated the occult arts brewed for himself on the top of the hill the elixir of life. An ox that was employed in grinding wheat at the foot of the hill sniffed the fragrant brew and broke away from his tether. Rushing up the hill in hot haste, he dragged after him the great grindstone. Arriving at the summit, he butted against the cauldron in which the hermit had

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 391 *seq.*

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 397-8.

<sup>3</sup> See pp. 393 *seq.*



cooked the soup of immortality, and eagerly lapped up the liquid as it trickled down the side. The hermit, emulating an ancient worthy called Kou Shan-chih who was charioted on the wings of a crane, jumped on the ox's back, and thereupon the two immortal beings, leaving the grindstone behind them as a memorial, passed away to heaven and were seen no more. This is only one of many quaint stories told by the old folks of Weihaiwei to explain the peculiar formation of a rock, the existence of a cave in a cliff, or the sanctity of some nameless mountain-shrine. Thus even the hills of Weihaiwei, bare of forests as they are and devoid of mystery as they would seem to be, have yet their gleam of human interest, their little store of romance, their bond of kinship with the creative mind of man.

## CHAPTER III

### HISTORY AND LEGEND

THOUGH Chinese historians have never set themselves to solve that modern European problem as to whether history is or is not a science, they have always—or at least since the days of Confucius—had a strong sense of its philosophical significance and its didactic value. Of the writings with which the name of Confucius is connected, that known as the *Ch'un Ch'iu* or “Spring and Autumn Annals” is the one that he himself considered his greatest achievement, and Mencius assures us that when the Master had written this historical work, “rebellious ministers and bad sons were struck with terror.” The modern reader is perhaps apt to wonder what there was in the jerky, disconnected statements of the *Ch'un Ch'iu* to terrify any one, however conscience-stricken; but Mencius's remark shows that history was already regarded as a serious employment, well fitted to engage the attention of philosophers and teachers of the people.

For a long time, indeed, practice lagged a long way behind theory. There is some reason to suppose that Confucius himself was not above adapting facts to suit his political opinions, which shows that history had not yet secured for itself a position of great dignity. The oldest historical work in the language is the *Shu Ching*, which is believed to have been edited by Confucius. Certainly the sage's study of



this work does not seem to have inspired him with any lofty theories as to how history ought to be treated, for his own work is considerably balder and less interesting than the old one. The Confucian who wrote the historical commentary known as the *Tso-chuan* improved upon his master's methods very greatly, and his work can be read with pleasure at the present day; but the first great Chinese historian did not appear till the second century B.C. in the person of Ssū-ma Ch'ien. For several reasons it would be incorrect to style him the Herodotus of China, but he may at least be regarded as the father of the modern art of historical writing in that country.<sup>1</sup>

Yet his example did not bring about the abolition of the old methods of the dry-bones annalists; for while the writers of the great Dynastic Histories have been careful to imitate and if possible improve upon his advanced style and method, and have thus produced historical works which for fidelity to truth, comprehensiveness, and literary workmanship will often bear comparison with similar productions in Europe, the compilers of the innumerable local histories have almost invariably contented themselves with legends, fairy-tales, and the merest chronicle of notable events arranged under the heads of successive years. The enormous quantity of these local histories may be realised from the fact that each province, prefecture and district, as well as each famous lake and each celebrated mountain, has one of its own.

These works are often very voluminous: an account of a single famous mountain, with its monasteries,

<sup>1</sup> A writer in the *Historians' History of the World*, published by *The Times* (see vol. xxiv. p. 683), says of the Chinese, that "up to the advent of Europeans in the sixteenth century A.D. their records are untrustworthy." This is an erroneous and most extraordinary statement. The Chinese possessed valuable and, on the whole, reliable records centuries before a single one of the modern States of Europe had begun even to furnish material for history, far less produce trustworthy historical records of its own.

sometimes extends over a dozen separate books; and the account of Ssüch'uan, a single province, is not far short of two hundred volumes in length. These productions are not, indeed, only of an historical and legendary nature: they include full topographical information, elaborate descriptions of cities, temples, and physical features, separate chapters on local customs, natural productions and distinguished men and women, and anthologies of the best poems and essays descriptive of special features of interest or inspired by the local scenery.

On legends and folk-lore and anything that seems in any way marvellous or miraculous, the compiler lingers long and lovingly; but when he comes to the narrative of definite historical facts he is apparently anxious to get over that dry but necessary part of his labours as rapidly as possible, and so gives us but a bare enumeration of the events in the order of their occurrence, and in the briefest and most direct manner possible.

As a rule, his succinctly-stated matters of fact may be regarded as thoroughly reliable. When a Chinese annalist states that in the year 990 there was a serious famine at Weihaiwei, the reader may take it for granted that the famine undoubtedly occurred, however uninformative the fact may be in the opinion of those who live nearly a thousand years later. What is apt to strike one as inexplicable is the occasional appearance, in a list of prosaic details which may be accepted as generally reliable, of some statement which suggests that the compiler must have suddenly lost control of his senses. For instance, we read in the *Wên-têng Chih* or Annals of the district in which the greater part of Weihaiwei is situated, that in the year which corresponds with 1539 there were disastrous floods, and that in the autumn a large dragon suddenly made its appearance in a private dwelling. "It burst the walls of the house," says the chronicler, "and so got away; and then there was a terrific



hailstorm." Why such startling absurdities are introduced into a narrative that is generally devoid of the least imaginative sparkle, may be easily understood when we remember that such animals as dragons, phœnixes and unicorns and many other strange creatures were believed in (or at least their existence was not questioned) by educated Chinese up to a quite recent date; and the writer of the *Wên-têng Chih*, when noting down remarkable occurrences as they were brought to his notice, saw no reason whatever why he should doubt the appearance of the dragon any more than he should doubt the reality of the floods or the hailstorm. That the dragon episode could not have happened because dragons did not exist was no more likely to occur to the honest Chinese chronicler than a doubt about the real existence of a personal Devil and a fiery Hell was likely to beset a pious Scottish Presbyterian of the eighteenth century, or than a disbelief in the creation of the world in six days in the year 4004 B.C. was likely to disturb the minds of the pupils of Archbishop Ussher.

The Chinese chronicles from which we derive our knowledge of the past history of Weihaiwei and the adjacent country are those of *Wên-têng* in four volumes, *Jung-ch'êng* in four, *Ning-hai* in six and *Weihaiwei* (that is, the Wei of Weihai) in two. The first three are printed from wooden blocks in the usual old-fashioned Chinese style, and this means that recently-printed copies are far less clear and legible than the first impressions, which are unfortunately difficult to obtain; the last (that of Weihaiwei) seems to exist in manuscript only, and is consequently very rare. It is from these four works chiefly, though not solely, that the information given in the rest of this chapter, as in many other parts of the book, has been culled; and while endeavouring to include only such details as are likely to be of some interest to the European reader, I trust there will be enough to

give him an accurate idea not only of the history of Weihaiwei but also of that prodigious branch of Chinese literature of which these works are typical.

The traditions of Weihaiwei and its neighbourhood take us back to the days of myth. The position of this region at the end of a peninsula which formed, so far as China knew, the eastern limit of the civilised world, made it, as we have seen, the fitting birthplace of legend and marvel. Not content with taking us back to the earliest days of eastern Shantung as a habitable region, the legends assure us of a time when it was completely covered by the ocean. Thousands of years ago, it is said, a Chinese princess was drowned there.<sup>1</sup> She was then miraculously turned into a bird called a *ching wei*, and devoted herself in her new state of existence to wreaking vengeance on the cruel sea for having cut short her human life. This she did by flying to and fro between land and sea carrying stones in her beak and dropping them into the water one by one until, by degrees, they emerged above the surface and formed dry land. Thus her revenge for the drowning incident was complete: she punished the sea by annihilating it.

For many centuries—and in this matter history and legend coincide—the peninsular district of Shantung, including Weihaiwei, was inhabited by a non-Chinese race of barbarians. Not improbably they were among the aboriginal inhabitants of the central plains of China, who were driven west, south and east before the steady march of the invading Chinese, or—if we prefer to believe that the latter were an autochthonous race—by the irresistible pressure of

<sup>1</sup> This story is related in that ancient book of marvels the *Shan Hai Ching* ("Hill and Sea Classic"). The princess is there said to have been the daughter of the mythical Emperor Shên-nung (twenty-eighth century B.C.). As a *ching wei*, the princess is said to have had a white bill and red claws and to have been in appearance something like a crow.



Chinese expansion. The eastward-driven section of the aborigines, having been pressed into far-distant Shantung, perhaps discovered that unless they made a stand there they would be driven into the sea and exterminated; so they held their ground and adapted themselves to the new conditions like the Celts in Wales and Strathclyde, while the Chinese, observing that the country was hilly, forest-clad, and not very fertile, swept away to the richer and more tempting plains of the south-west.

This may or may not be a correct statement of what actually occurred: all we know for certain is that at the dawn of the historical epoch eastern Shantung was still inhabited by a people whom the Chinese regarded as uncouth foreigners. The name given to them in the *Shu Ching* is Yü I, words which, if they are to be translated at all, may be rendered as "the barbarians of the hill regions." The period to which the *Shu Ching* assigns them is that of the more or less mythical Emperors Yao, Shun and Yü, whose reigns are assigned to the twenty-third and twenty-fourth centuries B.C., the Chinese Golden Age. An alternative view of the Yü I is that they were not the people of eastern Shantung, but the inhabitants of one of the Japanese islands. Dr. Legge, again, took the view that Ch'ing Chou, one of the nine provinces into which the Emperor Yü divided the Empire, included the modern kingdom of Korea. As the Yü I are always referred to as inhabiting the most easterly portion of the Empire, Dr. Legge was obliged to assign them to some part of the Korean peninsula<sup>1</sup>; following certain Chinese writers, moreover, he took Yü I to be a place-name, though this surely can only have been by the transference of the name or nickname of a people to their place of habitation. The whole question is hardly worth discussing, for it is almost impossible to disentangle fact from myth in respect of any of the alleged events of that far-off age; though,

<sup>1</sup> See Legge's *Chinese Classics*, vol. iii. pt. 1. pp. 18 and 102-3.

on the whole, it seems improbable that Yü's Empire—presuming that Yü was an historical personage—ever extended as far as some patriotic Chinese commentators would like to make out, or ever included any portion of either Korea or Japan. The great K'ang Hsi dictionary definitely states that the Yü I country "is the present Têng-chou," which includes the north-eastern section of Shantung all the way to the Promontory. The dictionary also describes it as "the place where the sun rises." An interesting point in connection with the Yü I is that it was to their country that the Emperor Yao (2357 B.C.) is said to have sent one of the Imperial Astronomers to "observe the heavens." The heavens of those days must have been well worth observing, for Chinese legends say there were then ten suns,<sup>1</sup> which all rose out of a prodigious abyss of hot water. At one time, it was said, nine of the suns sat every day in the lower branches of a great tree that grew in the land of Fu-sang, and one sat on the topmost branch; but in the time of Yao all the suns climbed up together to the top of the tree and made everything so uncomfortably hot that the Emperor shot at them and succeeded in destroying nine. Since then the world has had to content itself with a single sun.<sup>2</sup>

Assuming that the ordinary interpretations of the *Shu Ching* are correct, it appears that in the Golden Age of Yao the office of Astronomer-Royal, as we should say, was an exclusive perquisite of two families surnamed Hsi and Ho. Four members of these

<sup>1</sup> Ten was a sort of mystic number with the ancient Chinese. Lao Tzū, the "Old Philosopher," for instance, is supposed to have had ten lines on each hand and ten toes on each foot.

<sup>2</sup> These superstitions, which are treated seriously in the *Shan Hai Ching*, are referred to in the *Lun Hêng* of Wang Ch'ung, a writer of the first century A.D. Wang Ch'ung decided that the ten suns could not have been real suns, for if they had been in a Hot Water Abyss they would have been extinguished, because water puts out fire; and if they had climbed a tree their heat would have scorched the branches! (See Forke's transl. of *Lun Hêng*, Luzac & Co: 1907, pp. 271 seq.)



privileged families were sent to establish observatories in the four quarters of the Empire, east, west, south, and north, in order that they might "deliver respectfully the seasons to the people." The passage of the *Shu Ching* in which this matter is mentioned<sup>1</sup> is of great scientific interest on account of its astronomical details, and of great importance as establishing the reliability of early Chinese records. The only point that concerns us here is that one of the astronomers—namely, the second of three of the privileged Ho brothers—was sent to a tract of country called Yang Ku—"the Valley of Sunlight"—in the territory of the Yü I. His special duty it was to "receive as a guest the rising sun, and to adjust and arrange the labours of the Spring." Monopoly and absence of competition seem to have had their inevitable result; the privileged families of Hsi and Ho fell into utter disgrace, and were charged with having "neglected the ordering of the seasons and allowed the days to get into confusion,"—and all this because they gave themselves up to the pleasures of wine and female society instead of keeping a careful watch on the movements of the heavenly bodies. The Hsi and Ho had evidently become magnates of no small importance, for it was necessary to send an army to punish them. Their main offence, as we gather from the *Shu Ching*,<sup>2</sup> was that they made some sad blunder in connection with an eclipse, and the penalty attached to an offence of this nature was death. The only point with reference to all this that bears upon our subject is that the eastern observatory, presided over by one of the Ho family, was probably situated somewhere in the extreme eastern part of the Shantung peninsula: and though it is open to sceptics to declare that the astronomer, the observatory, and the Emperor himself were all figments of the Chinese imagination, it is equally open to any one to hold, though quite im-

<sup>1</sup> See Legge's *Chinese Classics*, vol. iii. pt. 1, pp. 18–23.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. iii. pt. 1, pp. 162 seq.

possible for him to prove, that the Yang Ku—the Vale of Sunlight—was no other than the sandy strip of sun-bleached territory that lies between the sombre rocks of the Shantung Promontory and the most easterly hills of Weihaiwei.<sup>1</sup>

Whether the people of this district were or were not called the Barbarians of the Hill Regions at the dawn of Chinese history, or whether in their territory there was or was not a place called the Vale of Sunlight, does not affect the undoubted truth of the statement that the Shantung peninsula was up to historic times inhabited by a race, or the remnants of a race, that was not Chinese. We may be sure, from what we know of the boundaries and inter-relations of the various Chinese states in the Confucian epoch (that is, the sixth century B.C.), that if Confucius himself had travelled from his native state of Lu through that of Ch'i and so on in a north-easterly direction until he reached the sea, he would have been obliged to engage an interpreter to enable him to communicate with the inhabitants of the district we now know as Weihaiwei.

We may presume without rashness that as time went on these Eastern barbarians gradually assimilated themselves with, or were assimilated by, their civilised Chinese neighbours. The process was probably a long one, for we do not hear of the establishment of ordinary Chinese civil government until the epoch of the Han dynasty, about 200 B.C. Perhaps the legendary journeys of Ch'in Shih Huang-ti, the "First Emperor," which, as we have seen, are supposed to have taken place a few years earlier, really represent some great military achievement whereby the far-eastern barbarians were for the first time brought under the Chinese yoke. The local

<sup>1</sup> The *Shan Hai Ching* mentions an island in the Wên-têng district, off the south-east coast, called Su-mên-tao, which still bears that name; and describes it as *jih yüeh so ch'u*—"the place where the sun and moon rise." This part of the ocean, though not the island itself, is visible from the sandy strip mentioned in the text.



annals mention the fact that during the Chou dynasty, which preceded that of Ch'in Shih Huang-ti and held the throne of China from 1122 B.C. to 255 B.C., the present district of Wên-têng (including Weihaiwei) formed part of the Mou-tzŭ country; but it must have been an independent or semi-independent state, for no Chinese administrators are mentioned. Later on there was an hereditary marquisate of Mou-p'ing, which extended over much of the country we are considering.

The dynasty founded by the "First Emperor" divided the whole Empire as it then was into thirty-six *chiün* or provinces, and Wên-têng formed part of the Ch'i province. At last, in the sixth year of Kao Tsu of the Han dynasty (201 B.C.), a Chinese magisterial district was founded in the eastern peninsula for the first time, though the city chosen as the centre of government was not Wên-têng but a place called Pu-yeh-ch'êng, and the *hsien* or magisterial district was accordingly known as Pu-yeh-Hsien. This city, which is said<sup>1</sup> to have been founded by one Lai-tzŭ in the "Spring and Autumn" period twenty-five centuries ago, is now a small village in the modern Jung-ch'êng district, a short distance from the British frontier on the Chinese side, and whatever glory it may once have possessed has totally departed. The origin of the name, which means "Nightless," is unknown, though naturally one would like to connect it in some way with the Sunlit Vale of the astronomer Ho. The new *hsien* city was assigned to the prefecture of Tung-lai, then the most easterly prefecture in the province.

From this time onward all the north-eastern part of Shantung, including the districts with which we are specially concerned, remained under the civil administration of China. From time to time various changes were made in the seat of district-government and in the boundaries of the prefectures, but these it would

<sup>1</sup> See the *T'ai Ping Huan Yü Chi* (*chüan* 20).

be superfluous to follow in detail. In the fourth year of T'ien T'ung (568 of our era), Wên-têng city became the magistrate's headquarters, and the district was placed in the Ch'ang-kuang prefecture under the name of Wên-têng-shan Hsien. Early in the period K'ai Huang (581-600), the abolished Ch'ang-kuang prefecture gave place to Mou Chou, and Wên-têng was placed in the Tung-lai prefecture, to which Pu-yeh had formerly been assigned. Passing over many similar administrative changes of no special significance we come to the Ming dynasty, which began to reign in 1368. In the ninth year of Hung Wu (1376) the present prefecture of Têng-chou was created. Both Wên-têng and Ning-hai districts were assigned to the new prefecture and have remained under its jurisdiction ever since.

Before Jung-ch'êng (in the neighbourhood of the Shantung Promontory) was made a separate magistracy, which was not till 1735, the position of Wên-têng was most responsible and often perilous, for it faced the sea on three sides—north, east, and south. The chronic danger that menaced these shores came from the restless Japanese. From the time of the Northern Wei dynasty (401 of our era) onwards, the Chinese Government found it necessary to take special measures for the protection of the Shantung coasts from Japanese pirates. Elaborate military precautions, say the records, were taken in 742, during the epoch of the mighty T'ang dynasty, and again in 1040 (Sung dynasty) and in 1341 (Yüan dynasty). The failure of the warlike Mongols (who founded the last-named dynasty) when they took to over-sea expeditions, is no less remarkable than their wonderful successes on land. The armadas despatched in 1274 and in 1281 by the great Kublai Khan for the purpose of reducing to obedience the refractory Japanese has been spoken of as an unwarranted attack on the liberty of a free and gallant people, which met with well-deserved failure; but when we know how the pirates of Japan



had repeatedly harassed the coasts of China and, more particularly, had made innumerable murderous attacks on the helpless farmers and fishermen of the eastern coasts of Shantung, an entirely new light is thrown upon Kublai's Japanese policy.

The whole history of Asia and of the world might have been changed (perhaps for the worse, but not necessarily so) if the mighty Mongol fleet that set sail for Japan in 1281 had not been scattered by hostile winds and waves and defeated by its brave human adversaries. This was the only serious attempt ever made by China to conquer Japan, and though the Chinese dynasty of that day had carried its victorious arms through a great part of the Euro-Asiatic continent it utterly failed in its efforts to reduce to vassalage the island Empire of the East. Yet it was not always Japan that represented enlightenment and civilisation: it was not always China that stood for stagnation and barbarism. When Kublai sent envoys to Japan in 1275 and in 1279 they were not treated with the courtesy that the world has in more recent years learned to expect from the natives of Japan: they were simply deprived of their heads.

The disasters to their fleets appear to have discouraged the Chinese from again trying their fortunes on the ocean; while the Japanese, always intrepid sailors and fighters, re-entered with zest into the profitable occupation of raiding the coasts of China and robbing her of her sea-borne merchandise. "The spacious days of great Elizabeth," made glorious for England by knightly freebooters and gentleman pirates, were to some extent anticipated in the north-western Pacific during the twelfth and succeeding centuries of our era. Japan took more than ample revenge for the insult offered her by the great Kublai. The whole coast-line of China lay open to her attacks and she utilised the situation to the utmost, but it was north-eastern Shantung that suffered most of all. For a long time the people of Wên-têng and neighbouring

districts, who were only poor fisher-folk and farmers, sparse in numbers, vainly implored the Government to save them from their miseries and protect them from the sea-rovers. The measures hitherto fitfully employed to safeguard the coast had been repeatedly shown to be inadequate. Soon after the commencement of the Ming period (1368) the Imperial Government at last began to make a serious effort to keep inviolate the shores of the Empire and to succour the people who "had in the past suffered grievous hurt," so runs a Chinese account of the matter, "from the pestilent outrages committed by the rascally Dwarfs."

It may be mentioned that in the Chronicles of Wên-têng and Weihaiwei the Japanese are never referred to except as *Wo* or *Wo-jên*, which literally means Dwarfs. This term was not current only among the unlettered classes: it was regularly employed in official documents and memorials intended for the inspection of the Shantung Provincial Government.<sup>1</sup> A great Chinese geographical work published in the tenth century of our era is even more uncomplimentary, for it states<sup>2</sup> that "since the later Han dynasty [which reigned from 25 to 220 A.D.] the country [Japan] has been known as that of the Dwarf-slave country," and it gives details as to the tribute said to have been paid by Japan to China for a period of many centuries.

The new defensive measures taken by the Government consisted in the establishment of Military Districts (*Wei*)<sup>3</sup> at various strategic points round the coast of Shantung. Of these Districts Weihaiwei was one and Ch'êng Shan was another. These two *Wei* were

<sup>1</sup> The offensive appellation is preserved to this day in the name of a small island 120 *li* south-west of the Shantung Promontory, known as Dwarfs' Island. The term is still frequently used by the people, and it often occurred in formal petitions addressed to my own Court until I expressly forbade, under penalty, its further use.

<sup>2</sup> *T'ai P'ing Huan Yü Chi*, 174th *chüan*, pp. 3 *seq*

<sup>3</sup> See pp. 12 *seq*.





PART OF WEIHAIWEI CITY WALL (see p. 47).



*Photo by Fleet Surgeon C. M. Beadnell, R.N.*

THE AUTHOR AND TOMMIE ON THE QUORK'S PEAK (see p. 397).

(Summit of Mount Macdonald.)





created in 1398, thirty years after the establishment of the Ming dynasty. The carrying out of the project was entrusted to two high officials, one of whom took up his temporary residence on Liukungtao. A wall was built a few years later (1403) round the village of Weihai, the modern Weihaiwei "city," and the headquarters of Ch'êng-shan-wei, known to us as the town of Jung-ch'êng, was similarly raised to the dignity of a walled city. Military colonies—that is, bands of soldiers who were allowed to take up agricultural land and to found families—were brought into every Wei under the command of various leaders, the chief of whom were known as *chih-hui*. This title, generally applied to the chiefs of certain non-Chinese tribes, was in many cases hereditary. Even in Weihai, Ning-hai and Ch'êng-shan the *chih-hui* were petty military chieftains rather than regular military officers. There were other commanders known as *li ssü*, *ch'ien-hu* and *pai-hu*,<sup>1</sup> all of which titles—being generally applied to petty tribal chiefs—were probably selected in order to emphasise the two facts that the Wei system was extraneous to the general scheme of Chinese civil and military administration and that the officers of a Wei were not only soldiers but also exercised a general jurisdiction, civil as well as military, over the affairs of the Wei and its soldier-colonists.

The Chinese Government has always done its best, in the interests of peace and harmony and general good order, to inculcate in the minds of its subjects a reverence for civil authority. Hence, besides appointing a number of military officials whose enthusiasm for their profession might lead them to an exaggerated notion of the dignity of the arts of war, the Government also appointed a *Ju Hsüeh*, or Director of Confucian studies, such as existed in every civil

<sup>1</sup> For notices concerning the *ch'ien-hu* and *pai-hu* of the tribes of far-western China at the present day, see the author's *From Peking to Mandalay* (John Murray : 1908), pp. 172, 176, 190, 425-7, 429.

magistracy. To render the ultimate civil control more effective the Wei were at first regarded as nominally under the civil jurisdiction of the appropriate magistracies: Weihaiwei thus remained an integral part of Wên-têng Hsien. A change was made apparently on the recommendation of the magistrate of Wên-têng himself, who pointed out the failure of the joint-administration of Hsien and Wei and said that "the existing system whereby the Magistracy controls the Wei is much less convenient than a system whereby each Wei would look after itself"—subject of course to the ultimate control of the higher civil authorities. From the year 1659, then, that is sixty-one years after the first establishment of the Wei system, Hsien and Wei were treated as two entirely separate jurisdictions, neither having any authority over the other. This was the system that remained in force from that time onward until the final abolition of the Wei in 1735.

The main object in establishing these Wei was, as we have seen, to provide some effective means of repelling the persistent attacks of Japanese raiders. In this object the authorities appear to have been only moderately successful. "When the sea-robbers heard of what had been done," says one exultant writer, "they betook themselves a long way off and dared not cast any more longing looks at our coast; and thus came peace to hundreds and thousands of people. No more intermittent alarms and disorders, no more panics and stampedes for the people of Weihai!" This view of the situation was unduly rosy, for in the fourth year of the reign Ming Yung Lo (1406)—only eight years after the creation of the several Wei—the Japanese (*Wo k'ou*, "Dwarf-pirates") effected a landing at Liukungtao, and additional troops had to be summoned from long distances before they could be expelled. Two years later—as if to show their contempt for one Wei after another—they landed in force at Ch'êng-shan, and though they did not succeed in capturing the new walled city of Ch'êng-



shan-wei they overwhelmed the garrisons of two neighbouring forts. These daring raids resulted in an increase and reorganisation of the troops attached to each Wei, and in the appointment of an officer with the quaint title of "Captain charged with the duty of making preparations against the Dwarfs." Henceforward the forts under each Wei were known as "Dwarf-catching Stations," while the soldiers were "Dwarf-catchers." It is not explained what happened to the Dwarfs when caught, but there is no reason to suppose they were treated with undue leniency. It is perhaps well for the self-respect of the Chinese that the Wei establishments had been abolished long before the capture of Weihai by the Japanese in 1895, otherwise the Catchers would have found themselves in the ignoble position of the Caught.

We have seen that the city wall of Weihaiwei was first built in 1403. The troops were stationed within the city and also in barracks erected at the various beacon-posts and forts which lined the coast to east and west, but considerable numbers in times of peace lived on their farms in the neighbourhood and only took up arms when specially summoned. The official quarters of the commandant of the Wei—the principal *chih-hui*—were in the yamên which is now the residence of the Chinese deputy-magistrate. The number of troops under his charge seems to have varied according to the exigencies of the moment, but it is recorded that Weihaiwei was at first (at the end of the fourteenth century) provided with a garrison of two thousand soldiers, which number was gradually increased. The area of the Wei—including the lands devoted to direct military uses and those farmed by the military colonists—was probably considerably less than one hundred square miles in extent, and embraced a part of the most northerly (peninsular) portion of the territory now administered by Great Britain.

It was not only from foreign "barbarians" that the

inhabitants of Wên-têng had to fear attack. Their own lawless countrymen were sometimes no less daring and ruthless than the Japanese. Those that came by sea were, indeed, foreigners in the eyes of the people of Shantung, for most of them came from the provinces south of the Yangtse and spoke dialects quite incomprehensible in the north. During the Chia-ching period (1522-66) a Chinese pirate named Wang Hsien-wu seized the island of Liukung, within full view of the soldiers of the Wei, and maintained himself there with such ease and comfort that he built fifty-three houses for his pirate band and took toll of all junks that passed in and out of the harbour. He was finally dislodged by a warlike Imperial Censor, who after his main work was accomplished made a careful survey of the arable land of the island and had it put under cultivation by soldier-farmers. This useful work was again pursued with energy rather more than half a century later, when in 1619 the prefect T'ao Lang-hsien admitted a few immigrants to the island and enrolled them as payers of land-tax. With a view to their better protection against further sudden attacks from pirates he established on the island a system of signal-beacons.

The last year or two of the Ming dynasty (1642-3) was a troublous and anxious time for all peace-loving Chinese. The events that led to the expulsion of the Mings and the establishment of the present (Manchu) dynasty on the Chinese throne are too well known to need detailed mention. A great part of the Empire was the prey of roving bands of rebels and brigands, one of whom—a remarkable adventurer named Li Tzŭ-ch'êng—after repeatedly defeating the imperial troops finally made himself master of the city of Peking. The last Emperor of the Ming dynasty, overwhelmed with shame and grief, hanged himself within the palace grounds. The triumph of Li was short-lived, for the warlike tribes of Manchuria, readily accepting an invitation from the Chinese imperialist



commander-in-chief to cross the frontier and drive out the presumptuous rebels, soon made themselves supreme in the capital and in the Empire. The condition of the bulk of the Chinese people during this time of political ferment was pitiable in the extreme. Military leaders, unable to find money to pay their troops, neither could nor would prevent them from committing acts of pillage and murder. Bands of armed robbers, many of them ex-soldiers, roamed over the land unchecked, leaving behind them a trail of fire and blood.

Confining our attention to the districts with which we are specially concerned, we find that a band of brigands took by assault the walled city of Ch'êng-shan, while at Weihaiwei the conduct of the local troops was so disorderly that civilians with their wives and families had to abandon their fields and homes and flee for refuge to the tops of hills.<sup>1</sup> The *chih-hui* in command of the local Wei at this momentous time, coming to the conclusion that the dynasty was tottering and that the seals of office issued by the Ming Emperors would shortly bring disaster on their possessors, deserted his post and sought a dishonoured refuge at home. It was not for several years afterwards that the distracted people of Weihaiwei, or such of them as had survived the miseries of those terrible days, once more found themselves in possession of their ancestral farms and reasonably secure from rapine and outrage.

The strong rule of the early Ta Ch'ing Emperors (the Manchu dynasty) had its natural effect throughout the whole country. Law-abiding folk enjoyed the fruits of their industry without molestation, while robbers and pirates found their trade both more dangerous and less profitable than in the good old days of political disorder. Yet it was not to be supposed that even the great days of K'ang Hsi and his two remarkable successors were totally unmarked by

<sup>1</sup> See p. 31.

occasional troubles for the people of so remote and exposed a section of the Empire as north-eastern Shantung. The year 1703, say the local annals, was a disastrous one, for floods in spring and a drought in summer were followed in autumn by the arrival at Weihaiwei of shiploads of Chinese pirates. Soldiers from the neighbouring camps of Ning-hai, Fu-shan (Chefoo) and Wên-têng had to be sent for to assist the local garrison in beating them off. Nine years later, on the seventeenth day of the tenth month, pirates arrived at the island of Chi-ming,<sup>1</sup> whereupon a great fight ensued in which a brave and distinguished Chinese commander lost his life.

An important year for the districts we are considering was 1735. For some years previous to this the question of the abolition of the various Wei and amalgamating them with the appropriate Hsien had been eagerly discussed in civil and military circles. The question was not, indeed, one of dismantling fortifications or denuding the place of troops: these, it was reluctantly recognised, were a permanent necessity. The disputed point was merely one of jurisdiction and organisation. As we have seen, the Wei were something quite exceptional in the Chinese administrative system; the creation of districts under direct military control, free from any interference on the part of the civil magistrates, had been in Chinese eyes a dangerous departure from the traditional administrative practice of past ages and could not be justified except as a temporary measure, which, being bad in principle, should only be resorted to under pressure of abnormal conditions. Several of the memorials and despatches written for and against the retention of the Wei are preserved in the printed Annals of the districts concerned. The matter was considered of such grave importance that a provincial governor and a governor-general were separately sent by the central Government to inquire into local con-

<sup>1</sup> See p. 25.



ditions at the north-eastern peninsula and to prepare detailed reports on the problems of administration and defence. The end of it all was that in 1735 the several Wei were abolished: Weihaiwei resumed its old place within the magistracy of Wên-têng, while the Promontory Wei of Ch'êng-shan was converted into a new magisterial district under the name of Jung-ch'êng Hsien. Similar fates befell the other Wei of eastern Shantung, such as Ching-hai, Ta-sung and Ning-hai. The boundary of Jung-ch'êng was placed as far west as the villages of Shêng-tzũ and Ch'iao-t'ou,<sup>1</sup> and therefore, as we have seen, the territory temporarily administered by Great Britain contains portions of both Wên-têng and Jung-ch'êng districts.

In most magisterial districts which include sea-ports or large market-centres there are certain small officials styled *hsün-chien* who reside at such places and carry on the routine and minor duties of civil government and police administration on behalf and under the authority of the district-magistrates. A *hsün-chien* in fact presides over what may be called a sub-district and acts as the magistrate's deputy. Before Weihai ceased to be a Wei an official of this class resided near what was then the northern boundary of the Wên-têng magistrate's jurisdiction, namely at a place called Wên-ch'üan-chai. When the Wei was absorbed in the Wên-têng district in 1735 and the boundaries of that district were thus made to include all the land that lay to the north, the sub-district of Wên-ch'üan-chai was abolished, and a new sub-district created at Weihai with headquarters at Weihai city. The last *hsün-chien* of Wên-ch'üan-chai became the first *hsün-chien* of Weihai, and the former place sank at once into the position of an ordinary country village. Wên-ch'üan-chai must not be confused with Wên-ch'üan-t'ang, the headquarters of the South Division of the territory under British rule;<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 14, 98.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 98.

the two places are several miles apart, though both at present fall within the magisterial jurisdiction of the British District Officer. It is interesting to note that Wên-ch'üan-t'ang itself was long ago—probably before the days of the Ming dynasty—the seat of a military official, the site of whose yamên is still pointed out by the people of the locality. The last *hsün-chien* of Wên-ch'üan-chai, who was transferred to Weihai city, was a man of such excellent reputation that his name is remembered with respect to this day. The people of the neighbourhood still repeat a well-known old rhyme which he was fond of impressing upon their ancestors' minds :

*"Shan yu shan pao  
O yu o pao  
Jo shih pu pao  
Shih-ch'ên wei tao."*

This being translated means :

"Happiness is the reward of virtue; misery is the reward of wickedness. If virtue and wickedness have not brought their due recompense it is only because the time has not yet come."

This man, whose name was Yang, is said to have been so upright and clean-handed an official that when he was relieved of office he found himself without funds sufficient to take him home to his native place, which was a long way off. However, being connected by marriage with the Li family of Ai-shan-ch'ien,<sup>1</sup> he took up his residence with them and there spent the remainder of his life. He was buried in the graveyard of the Li family, where his tomb is still to be seen.

The abolition of the Wei necessitated military changes of some importance, but the descendants of the old military colonists remained where they were and kept possession of their lands. The only differ-

<sup>1</sup> This is a village in British territory near Ai-shan Miao, a temple described on pp. 385-6.



ence to them was that their names as land-holders were now enrolled in the ordinary civil registers instead of in separate military registers. The *chiün ti* (military lands) became *min ti* (civilian lands) and the payment of land-tax was substituted for military service.

The country appears to have remained unmolested by external foes until 1798, when a fleet of pirate-junks made its appearance with the usual disagreeable results. The years 1810-11 were also bad years for the people, as the eastern part of the province was infested with bands of roving brigands—probably poor peasants who, having been starved out of house and home by floods and droughts and having sold all their property, were asserting their last inalienable right, that of living. Whatever their provocation may have been, it appears from the local records that during the two years just mentioned their daring robberies caused the temporary closing of some of the country-markets. The robbers went about in armed bands, each consisting of seventy or eighty men, and complaints were openly made that the officials would take no active steps to check these disorderly proceedings because the yamên-runners—the ill-paid or unpaid rabble of official underlings by whom Chinese yamêns are infested—were in league with the robbers and received a percentage of the booty as “hush-money.” The usual method of attack adopted by the miscreants was to lurk in the graveyards—where in this region there is always good cover—and lie in wait for unprotected travellers. Unlike the Robin Hoods and Dick Turpins of England they shrank not from robbing the poor, and they spared neither old woman nor young child.

Human enemies were not the only adverse forces with which the much-harried peasant of Weihaiwei had to contend. Famine, drought, earthquake, pestilence, all had their share in adding to his sorrows. Sometimes his crops were destroyed by locusts;

sometimes his domestic animals became the prey of wild beasts. We find from the Annals that the first visit of British war-vessels to Weihaiwei, which occurred in 1816,<sup>1</sup> synchronised with a period of great misery: famines and epidemics in 1811 and 1812 had been followed by several years of agricultural distress; and during the years from 1813 to 1818 a new scourge visited the people in the shape of packs of ravenous wolves. The officers and men of the *Alceste* and *Lyra* might have had the pleasure, had they only known it, of joining in the wolf-hunts organised by the local officials.

The published chronicles do not carry us further than the middle of the nineteenth century, though the yamêns of Wên-têng and Jung-ch'êng possess all the information necessary for the production of new up-to-date editions of their local histories as soon as the higher provincial authorities issue the necessary orders. A new edition of the *T'ung Chih*, the general Annals and Topography of the whole Province of Shantung, is at present in course of preparation at the capital; and to this work each of the magistracies will be required to contribute its quota of information. If the work is brought up to recent times it will be interesting to read its account of the war with Japan in 1894-5, and of the capture of Weihaiwei. Before the outbreak of that war the fortifications of Weihaiwei had been entirely reconstructed under the direction of European engineers. It was not, however, so strong a fortress as Port Arthur, upon which six millions sterling had been spent by the Government, and which was regarded by the Chinese as impregnable. Yet Port Arthur fell to the victorious Japanese after a single day's fighting, whereas Weihaiwei, vigorously attacked by land and sea, did not capitulate till three weeks after the Japanese troops had landed (on January 20, 1895) at the Shantung Promontory.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 1.



## CHAPTER IV

### CHINESE CHRONICLES AND LOCAL CELEBRITIES

SINCE February 1895 Weihaiwei has never been out of the hands of a foreign Power. At the conclusion of the war the place was retained in the hands of the Japanese as security for the due fulfilment of the conditions of peace. Then followed the concerted action of the three States of Germany, Russia and France to rob Japan of some of the fruits of her victory. The moving spirit in this coalition was Russia, who ousted Japan from Port Arthur and took possession of it herself. As a result of this manœuvre Great Britain demanded that Weihaiwei should be "leased" to her "for as long a period as Port Arthur remains in the occupation of Russia." It may be noted that the original "lease" of Port Arthur by China to Russia was for twenty-five years, which period will not elapse till 1923. Another almost simultaneous attack on Chinese integrity was made by Germany, whose long-sought opportunity of establishing herself on the coast of China was thrust in her way by the murder of two of her missionaries in Shantung. (Is it to be wondered at that the Chinese have at times regarded European missionaries as the forerunners of foreign armies and warships, in spite of the missionary's assertion that he is the apostle of universal love and has come to preach the Golden Rule?)

The Chinese in Shantung have a strange tale to tell of the murder of those German missionaries. They say the outrage had its origin in the kidnapping of a woman by an employee in a certain Chinese yamên. She had influential connexions, who promptly demanded her restitution. The kidnapper had the ear of the magistrate, who, turning a deaf ear to his petitioners, or professing to know nothing about the matter, took no action. The woman's relations then devoted their energy to bringing ruin upon the magistrate; and after long consultations decided that the surest and quickest method of doing so would be by killing the two local missionaries. This, they knew, would infallibly be followed by a demand from the foreign Government concerned for the magistrate's degradation and punishment. They had no grudge whatever against the missionaries, and merely regarded their slaughter as a simple means to a much-desired end. They carried out their plan with complete success, and the magistrate's ruin was the immediate result; but a further consequence, unforeseen by the murderers, was that "His Majesty the Emperor of China, being desirous of promoting an increase of German power and influence in the Far East," leased to His Majesty the German Emperor the territory of Kiaochou. Needless to say, an increase of the power and influence of any great European Power in the eastern hemisphere was, very naturally, the last thing to be desired by the Chinese Emperor and his people. It seems a pity that modern civilised States have not yet devised some means of putting an end to the ignoble warfare that is continually waged by the language of diplomacy against the language of simple truth.

The reader may be interested in some illustrations of the manner in which the Chinese official chronicler arranges, in chronological order, his statements of conspicuous local events. The following lists of occurrences with their dates (which are merely selec-



tions from the available material) are translated direct from the Chinese *Annals of Weihaiwei, Wên-têng, Jung-ch'êng, and Ning-hai*. A few of the meteorological and astronomical details are of some interest, if their meaning is not always obvious. With regard to the comets, I have made no attempt at exact verification, though the comet of 1682 was evidently Halley's, which is occupying a good deal of public and scientific attention at the present time. That of 1741 may have been either Olbers's or Pons's, and that of 1801 was perhaps Stephan's. But these are points which are best left to the man of science. The Chinese dates are in all cases converted into the corresponding dates of the Christian era.

## HAN DYNASTY.

40 B.C. A singularly successful year in the wild-silk industry, owing to the abundance of silk produced by the silkworms at Mou-p'ing Shan.

## CHIN DYNASTY.

353 A.D. (about January). The planet Venus crossed the orbit (?) of the planet Mars and passed over to the west. [This appears to be unintelligible.]

386 (about July). The planet Jupiter was seen in the daytime in the west.

## T'ANG DYNASTY.

841. In the autumn, hailstorms destroyed houses and ruined crops.

## SUNG DYNASTY.

990. Great famine.

## YÜAN DYNASTY.

1295-6. Floods.

1297. Seventh moon. Great famine. [The Chinese year begins a month or more later than the

European year. The word "moon" is used as an indication that the month is the lunar month, which alone is recognised in China.]

1330. Great famine.

1355. Locusts destroyed crops.

#### MING DYNASTY.

1408. Earthquake, with a noise like thunder.

1506. Seventh moon, sixth day. Great floods, both from sky and ocean. Crops destroyed and soil impregnated with salt.

1511. Wandering brigands entered the district. Hearing the sound of artillery, they fled.

1512. Third moon, thirteenth day. The bell and the drum in the temple of Ch'in Shih Huang-ti on Ch'êng-shan<sup>1</sup> sounded of their own accord. Immediately afterwards, the temple was destroyed by fire, but the images remained intact. On the same day a band of roving robbers entered Wên-têng city.

1513. A flight of locusts darkened the sun.

1516. Drought and floods. No harvest.

1518. Famine and starvation.

1546. Floods. Ninth moon, second day: a hailstorm and an earthquake, with a noise like thunder.

1548. Great earthquake. Countless dwelling-houses overthrown.

1556. Between five and six in the morning of the twenty-ninth day of the twelfth moon (early in 1556) the sun produced four parhelia (mock-suns) of great brilliance. The northern one was especially dazzling. [The appearance of four parhelia was regarded as unusual enough to merit special mention, but old inhabitants of Weihaiwei say that two "sun's ears," as they are called, are comparatively often seen at sunrise. According to the local folk-lore, a single "ear" on the left side of the sun

<sup>1</sup> See p. 23.



betokens high winds, while a single "ear" on the right foretells rain. If "ears" appear on both left and right, splendid weather for the farmers is to be expected.]

1570. Floods. All crops destroyed and houses flooded.
1576. Third moon, twenty-seventh day. Tremendous storm of wind and rain, and ruin of young crops.
1580. Landslips on the hills.
1585. Great famine.
1597. Earthquake and rumbling noise. From this year to 1609 there were no good harvests.
1613. Seventh moon, seventh day. At noon a black vapour came up from the north-east. There was a fierce wind and a great fall of rain. In the autumn there was a drought.
1615. A plague of locusts, resulting in the destruction of the crops.
1616. In spring, a great famine. Men ate human flesh. Free breakfasts were provided by the district-magistrate of Wên-têng, Chang Chiu-ching, and by the *chih-hui* of Weihaiwei, T'ao Chi-tsu, whereby thousands of lives were saved.
1620. Seventh moon, eighth day. A great storm, which tore up trees and destroyed houses. Many people crushed to death. Ninety-six junks wrecked on the coast and over one hundred men drowned.
1621. Fourth moon, eighteenth day. A rumour was spread that pirates had landed on the coast. Many people were so terrified that they fled to a distance of 800 *li*, and trampled each other under foot in their efforts to escape. It was a false rumour. In the autumn there was an earthquake.
1622. Locusts.
- 1623-5. Three years of excellent harvests.
1626. Fifth moon: storm with hailstones as big as

hens' eggs. Intercalary sixth moon: floods and destruction of crops. Seventh moon: great storm that uprooted trees.

1639. Locusts darkened the sky. Famine.

1640. Drought. Famine.

1641. Great famine. More than half the people perished. Men ate human flesh. Six hundred taels of money were given by the officials of Ning-hai to relieve the people of that district.

1642-3. No harvests. Country pillaged by robbers.

#### CH'ING DYNASTY.

1650. Spring and summer: drought. Autumn: floods and crops inundated.

1656. Great harvest.

1659. Comet in the Northern Dipper [the stars  $\alpha$   $\beta$   $\gamma$   $\delta$  in Ursa Major].

1662. At Weihaiwei the tide threw up a monstrous fish which was five *chang* high [over fifty-eight English feet], several tens of *chang* long [at least three hundred and sixty feet], with a black body and white flesh. The people of the place all went down and spent a couple of months or so in cutting up the great beast but did not come to the end of it. Those of the people who liked a bit of fun cut out its bones and piled them into a mound; the large bones were about twelve feet in circumference, the small ones about six feet. The small ones were his tail bones. [Stories of monstrous fishes are not rare along the Shantung coast, and—allowing for exaggerations with reference to dimensions—they are based on a substratum of fact. We have seen (see p. 27) that the bones of a vast fish were presented to the Kuan Ti temple in Weihaiwei city, where they may still be seen; and another set of fish-bones adorn the canopy of a theatrical



stage in the same city. For other references to great fishes, see pp. 24 and 26.]

1664. Drought. Seventh moon: a comet with a tail twelve feet in length.
1665. Earthquake. Great drought. Land taxes remitted. A comet.
1668. First moon. The sun produced four parhelia. On the twenty-fifth day a white vapour came from the south-west. On the seventeenth day of the sixth moon there was a great earthquake, and there were three noises like thunder. Parts of the city walls of Ch'êng-shan-wei and Wên-têng collapsed, and many houses. A devastating wind for three days spoiled the crops.
1670. Great snowstorm. Snow lay twelve feet deep. Intensely cold weather. Men were frozen to death on the roads and even inside their own houses.
1671. Great landslips on the hills. Sixth moon, rain and floods for three days, followed by ruin of crops and partial remission of land-tax.
1679. First moon: four halos appeared round the sun. Sixth moon, first day, and seventh moon, twenty-eighth day: earthquakes.
1682. Fifth moon, sixth day: earthquake destroyed two portions of the yamên of the district-magistrate, Wên-têng. Eighth moon, first day: a comet [Halley's?] was seen in daytime, and did not pass away till the eleventh day. In the same moon a violent storm occurred in one locality, spoiling the crops.
1685. Third moon, twelfth day. A violent wind.
1686. Earthquake. Sixth moon, twenty-eighth day, a comet came from the south-east as big as a peck-measure and as bright as the sun. It threaded the Southern Dipper and entered the Milky Way, where it became invisible. The sound of "heaven's drum" was heard four or five times.

1688. Twelfth moon, seventh day. Earthquake.
1689. Spring: famine. Sixth moon, first day: earthquake.
1691. Seventh moon, tenth day. Locusts.
1696. Floods and famine. In winter the district-magistrate provided free breakfasts.
1697. Government grain issued to save the people from starvation. Some however died of hunger.
1703. Floods and drought and a great famine in 1703 were followed in 1704 by deadly epidemics. More than half the population perished. The condition of the survivors was pitiful. They lived by eating the thatch that roofed their houses and they also ate human flesh. Land-tax remitted for three years.
1706. Great harvest.
1709. Rains injured crops. Famine.
1717. A great snowstorm at Weihaiwei on the twenty-sixth day of the first moon. People frozen to death. Eighth moon, rain and hail.
1719. Seventh moon. Great floods. Houses destroyed and crops ruined; the district-magistrate gave free breakfasts and issued grain for planting.
1723. Great harvest.
1724. Remission of three-tenths of land-tax for three years. Great snowfall in winter.
1725. In the second moon (about March) occurred the phenomenon of the coalescence of sun and moon and the junction of the jewels of the five planets.<sup>1</sup> [This has nothing to do with an eclipse. It is a phenomenon which is believed to indicate great happiness and prosperity, and good harvests. It is said to consist in the apparent simultaneous rising of sun and moon accompanied by peculiar atmospheric conditions. Some of the planets are supposed to go through a similar process.]

<sup>1</sup> *Jih yüeh ho pi, wu hsing lien chu.*



1730. Twelfth moon, twenty-eighth day (about January or February 1730), at nine in the evening, some beautiful parti-coloured clouds appeared in the north. They were resplendent with many tints intricately interwoven, and several hours passed before they faded away. Every one declared that the phenomenon betokened unexampled prosperity.
1736. First year of the reign of Ch'ien Lung. Thirtieths of the land-tax remitted. Eleventh moon, twenty-fourth and twenty-sixth days, earthquakes.
1739. Drought and floods.
1740. Land-tax remitted and public granaries opened.
1741. Seventh moon. A comet came from the west and did not fade till the twelfth moon. Great harvests.
1743. On the festival of the Ninth of the Ninth Moon a strange fish came ashore near Weihaiwei. Its head was like a dog's, its belly like a sea-turtle's. Its tail was six *ch'ih* long [say seven English feet] and at the end were three pointed prongs. On its back was a smaller fish, about ten inches long, which seemed to be made of nothing but spikes and bones. No one knew the name of either fish. It was suggested that perhaps the smaller one had fastened itself to the big one, and that the latter, unable to bear the pain of the small one's spikes, had dashed for the shore.
1747. Seventh moon, fifteenth day. Great storm: crops ruined.
1748. Locusts hid the sun and demolished the crops.
1749. Tenth moon, twenty-second day. Great storm and many drowned.
- 1751-2. Floods. Crops damaged by water and a hail-storm. Many died of starvation. Assistance given by Government, by the importation of grain from Manchuria.

- 1753. Good harvests.
- 1761. Great snowfall. Many geese and ducks frozen to death.
- 1765. Second moon, eleventh day : earthquake. Sixth moon : great floods, land flooded, houses destroyed, people injured.
- 1766. Great drought.
- 1767. Third moon, twenty-first day : great storm, trees uprooted and houses destroyed. Sixth moon, twentieth day : earthquake.
- 1769. Autumn, a comet.
- 1770. Seventh moon, twenty-ninth day. In the evening the north quarter of the sky became red as if on fire.
- 1771. Sixth moon. Continuous rain from second to ninth days. Crops ruined ; famine.
- 1774. Second moon, second day : great storm which made the sands fly and the rocks roll, burst open houses and uprooted trees. Heaven and earth became black. Eighth moon : locusts.
- 1775. Summer, great drought. Eighth moon, seventeenth day : earthquake.
- 1783. From first to sixth moon, no rain ; food excessively dear.
- 1785. Eighth moon, tenth day. Earthquake.
- 1790. Tenth moon, sixth day. Earthquake.
- 1791. Tenth moon, ninth day. Earthquake.
- 1796. First moon, second day. A sound like thunder rolled from north-east to south-west.
- 1797. Eleventh moon, second day. "Heaven's drum" was heard.
- 1801. Fourth moon. A star was seen in the north, of fiery red colour ; it went westward, and was like a dragon. Summer and autumn, great drought : all grass and trees withered. Famine in winter.
- 1802. Tenth moon. Wheat eaten by locusts.
- 1803. Great snowfall.



1807. Seventh moon. Comet seen in the west, dying away in the tenth moon. Good harvests.
1810. Floods. In spring, devastation was caused by wolves.
1811. Eighth moon. A comet was seen, more than forty feet long. There was a great famine. During this year there were seventeen earthquakes, the first occurring on the ninth day of the fourth moon, the last on the sixteenth day of the ninth moon.<sup>1</sup>
1812. Famine in spring. The people lived on willow-leaves and the bark of trees. Multitudes died of disease. The district-magistrate opened the public granaries. The famine continued till the wheat was ripe.
1813. Wolves caused devastation from this year onwards until 1818. The year 1816 was the worst, and the officials organised expeditions to hunt the wolves with dogs.
1815. A comet was seen in the west.
1817. Fourth moon, eighth day. Earthquake and loud noise.
1818. Sixth moon, floods. People drowned. A kind of temporary lifeboat service was organised by the officials.
1821. Famine. Locusts. A deadly pestilence in autumn. Fourth moon, a repetition of the celestial phenomenon mentioned under the date 1725.
1823. Earthquake.

<sup>1</sup> The large number of earthquakes recorded in the Annals of this region is remarkable. Only slight earth-tremors have been noticed since the beginning of the British occupation, but the experience of former days should prevent us from feeling too sanguine as to the future. A recent writer has pointed out that though violent earthquakes are not to be expected on "a gently sloping surface such as the ocean-bed from which the British Isles arise," they may be expected on "the steeply shelving margins of the Pacific Ocean." (Charles Davison in the *Quarterly Review*, April 1909, p. 496.)

1835. Sixth and seventh moons. More than forty days of rain. Government help given to the people.
1836. Famine. Food and seed provided by the officials. Abnormally high tides this year.
1838. Fourth moon. A plague of locusts. The district-magistrate collected the people of the country, and went out at their head to catch and slay the insects. After a few days they utterly vanished. Excellent harvest thereafter.
1839. From fourth to seventh moon, crops spoiled by excessive rain. Tenth moon, twelfth day, a noisy earthquake. From the sixteenth to the twenty-third of the same month rain fell unceasingly.
1840. Eclipse of the sun.
1842. Sixth moon, first day, an eclipse of the sun, during which the stars were visible.
1844. Eighth moon, twenty-fifth day, at midnight, a great earthquake.
1846. Sixth moon, thirteenth day, at night, a great earthquake.
1847. Seventh moon. The planet Venus was seen in daytime.
1848. Drought and locusts.
1850. First day of the New Year, an eclipse of the sun.
1852. Eleventh moon, first day, an eclipse of the sun.
1856. Seventh moon, locusts. Great pestilence. On the first of the ninth moon, an eclipse of the sun.
1861. Eighth moon, first day, same phenomenon as witnessed in 1725 and 1821.
1862. Seventh and eighth moons, great pestilence.

These extracts from the local chronicles are perhaps enough to prove that the Weihaiwei peasant has not always lain on a bed of roses. When we know him in his native village, and have learned to appreciate his powers of endurance, his patience, courage,



physical strength and manly independence, and remember at the same time how toilfully and amid what perils his ancestors have waged the battle of life, we shall probably feel inclined either to dissociate ourselves forthwith from the biological theory that denies the inheritance of acquired qualities or to recognise that the principle of natural selection has been at work here with conspicuous success.

The chief boast of the Promontory district, including Weihaiwei, is or should be its sturdy peasantry, yet it is not without its little list, also, of wise men and heroes. Weihaiwei, like other places, has its local shrine for the reverential commemoration of those of its men and women who have distinguished themselves for *hsien*, *chieh*, *hsiao*—virtue, wifely devotion and filial piety; and the accounts given us in the official annals of the lives and meritorious actions of these persons are not without interest as showing the nature of the deeds that the Chinese consider worthy of special honour and official recognition.<sup>1</sup>

On the northern slope of Wên-têng Shan, near the city of that name, is the tomb of *Hsien Hsien Shên Tzŭ*—the Ancient Worthy Shên. He was a noted scholar of the Chou dynasty (1122–293 B.C.). The T'ang dynasty honoured him (about one thousand years or more after his death) with the posthumous title of Earl of Lu (Lu Pai). The Sung dynasty about the year 1012 A.D. created the deceased philosopher Marquess of Wên-têng (Wên-têng Hou). His descendants—no longer of noble rank—are said to be still living in the ancestral village of Shên-chia-chuang (the village of the Shên family), his native place. In 1723 a new monument was erected at his grave by the district-magistrate of that time, and the custom was established for the local officials to offer sacrifices

<sup>1</sup> In another chapter mention will be made of the Virtuous Widows and other women of exemplary conduct whom the Chinese delight to honour.

at the marquess's tomb three days before the Ch'ing-ming festival.<sup>1</sup>

Close to Wên-ch'üan-t'ang (the headquarters of the South Division of Weihaiwei under British rule) is to be seen the grave of one Yü P'êng-lun, who during the terrible period 1639-43 honourably distinguished himself by opening soup-kitchens along the roadsides. He also presented a free burial-ground for the reception of the bones of the unknown or destitute poor who had starved to death. Free schools, moreover, and village granaries were founded by this enlightened philanthropist. After his death the Board of Rites in 1681 sanctioned his admission into the Temple of Local Worthies.

In 1446 were buried close to Weihaiwei the remains of a great general named Wei (*Wei Chiang-chün*) who had done good service against the Japanese.

Ch'i Ch'ung-chin, a native of Weihaiwei, is stated in the Chronicle to have been by nature sincere and filial, and a good friend. He was also zealously devoted to study. In 1648 he became an official and occupied many posts in Yünnan and other distant provinces. He governed the people virtuously, and conferred a great benefit on them during an inundation by constructing dykes. He died at his post through overwork.

Pi Kao was a *chih-hui* of Weihaiwei, and first took office in 1543. He was afterwards promoted to a higher military post in Fuhkien, and in 1547 died fighting against the "Dwarfs" who had landed on the coast of that province. He was canonised as one of the Patriot-servants of the Empire (*chung-ch'ên*).

Ku Shêng-yen from his earliest years showed exceptional zeal in the study of military tactics, and accustomed himself to horseback-riding and archery. In 1757 he became a military *chin shih* (graduate of high rank) and was selected for a post in Ssüch'uan.

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 186-7.



Subsequently in Yünnan he took part in fourteen actions against the Burmese. At Man-hua during a siege he was wounded in the head and had a severe fall, from which he nearly died. He took part in the operations against the Sung-p'an principality (in Ssüch'uan), and in 1773 the general commanding the imperial troops against the Chin-ch'uan rebels in the west of Ssüch'uan ordered him to lead the attack. This he did with conspicuous success, capturing numerous strongholds, bridges and outposts, and slaughtering enormous numbers of the enemy. He was honoured by the Emperor with the Peacock Feather and the Bat'uru.<sup>1</sup> Later on he received a wound from which he died. Further marks of imperial favour were bestowed upon him on the occasion of his funeral.

Wang Yüeh of the Ming dynasty passed a very good examination and was appointed a district-magistrate. For nine years he received no promotion, so he threw up his official post and came home whistling and singing with delight at having got his freedom. Among his writings are "Records of Southern Travel" and a description of Weihaiwei. The latter takes the form of an imaginary dialogue between a stranger from Honan and a Weihaiwei native.<sup>2</sup> It is too long to translate in full, but it begins thus: "From the far west came a stranger. Here at Weihai he rested awhile, and as he gazed at the limitless expanse of hills and ocean his feelings expressed themselves now in deep sighs, now in smiles of happiness. Summoning to his side a native of Weihai he introduced himself thus: 'I come from the province of Honan. No rich man am I, yet I love to wander hither and hither, wherever there are wonderful places or beautiful scenery to be visited. I have seen the sacred hills of Hêng, Sung, Hua and T'ai;<sup>3</sup> the famous rivers and lakes of the Empire, the

<sup>1</sup> A kind of Manchu D.S.O.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in *Weihaiwei Chih* (9th *chüan*, p. 69).

<sup>3</sup> See pp. 74, 391 *seq.*, 396.

Yangtse and the Han, the Tung-t'ing lake, the Hsiang river, have all been visited by me, all their points of interest examined and all their beauties seized. But methought that the great ocean I had not yet seen, for it lay far to the east.'” He goes on to describe by what route and under what difficulties he travelled, and “I don't know how many thousand *li* I haven't come,” he said plaintively; “my horse is weary and his hoofs are worn, my servant is in pain with swollen ankles, and just see what a pitiable sight I am with my tortured bones and muscles! However, here we are at last, and all I want to do is to gain new experiences and behold new scenes, and so remove all cause of future regret for things not seen.”

The Weihai man points out to the stranger the various features of interest of the place and gives a sketch of its history, and the narration ends up with his loyal wishes for the eternal preservation of his country and the long life of the Emperor.

Yüan Shu-fang took his degree in 1648 and received an appointment in Yang-chou,<sup>1</sup> where he fulfilled his official functions with wisdom and single-mindedness. He was fond of travelling about in the south-eastern provinces and attracted round him numbers of people of artistic temperament. After many years, continues his biographer, he retired from the civil service and went home to Weihaiwei. There he gave himself up with the greatest enthusiasm to the luxury of poetic composition. Among his poems are “Songs of the South.” He edited and annotated the *Kan Ying P'ien* [the Taoist “Book of Rewards and Punishments”] and other works of that nature. A little poem of his on the view of Liukungtao from the city wall is given a place in the *Weihaiwei Chih*.

The number of Chinese officials who, like Wang Yüeh or Yüan Shu-fang, have been glad to divest themselves of the cares and honours of office under

<sup>1</sup> A city on the Grand Canal in Kiangsu, well known on account of its association with the name of Marco Polo.



Government is surprisingly large. Disappointed ambition; constitutional dislike of routine employment, official conventionalities and "red tape"; a passion for the tranquil life of a student; a love of beauty in art or nature: these, or some of them, are the causes that have impelled multitudes of Chinese officials to resign office, often early in their careers, and seek a quiet life of scholarly seclusion either in their own homes or in some lonely hermitage or some mountain retreat. Even at the present day retired magistrates may be met with in the most unexpected places. I found one in 1908 living in a little temple at the edge of the stupendous precipice of Hua Shan in Shensi, eight thousand feet above the sea-level. He was a lover of poetry and a worshipper of Nature.

Ting Pai-yün was for some time a resident in but not a native of Weihaiwei. His personal name and native place are unknown. It is said that he obtained the doctorate of letters towards the end of the Ming period. His first official post was at Wei Hsien in Shantung. Subsequently he took to a roving life and travelled far and wide. When he came to Li Shan near Weihaiwei he was glad to find a kindred spirit in one Tung Tso-ch'ang, with whom he exchanged poems and essays. He devoted himself with the utmost persistence to the occult arts, and succeeded in foretelling the date of his own death. He practised his wizardry in the Lao mountains,<sup>1</sup> and people called him Mr. White-clouds.

Wang Ching, Ting Shih-chü, Kuo Hêng, Pi Ch'ing and some others receive honourable mention among the Weihaiwei worthies for their kindness and benevolence towards the poor during various periods of famine. Some writers are apt to assume that pity and charity are only to be met with among Christian peoples. The mistake is serious, but perhaps it is not an unnatural one, for we do not in Oriental countries see anything comparable with the vast charitable

<sup>1</sup> Close to the present German colony of Kiaochou.

organisations, the "missions" to the poor and vicious, the free hospitals, infirmaries and almshouses, that we see in Western countries. As a partial explanation of this we should remember that in countries where individualism is supreme there are more people who "fall by the wayside," lonely and helpless, than there are in countries where the family ties are indissoluble. The people of Weihaiwei consist of peasant-farmers—very poor from the Western point of view: yet there is not a beggar in the Territory, and if an almshouse or an infirmary were established there to-morrow it would probably remain untenanted.

Ch'i Yen-yün was a graduate and a devoted student of the art of poetry. He put his books in a bundle and trudged away to look for a Master. He wandered great distances, and made a pilgrimage to the Five Sacred Mountains. He was joined by a number of disciples, who came from all directions and travelled about with him. A pilgrimage to the Wu Yüeh or Five Sacred Mountains,<sup>1</sup> it may be mentioned, is regarded as a performance of no mean merit, through which the pilgrim will infallibly evolve mystical or spiritual powers of marvellous efficacy. These valuable powers have not yet shown themselves in a foreigner from distant Europe who performed this little feat in 1908-9.

Wang Ch'i-jui was famous among all the literates of the district for his exemplary character. When he was only thirteen he and his whole family were bought by a certain official as domestic servants. Wang paid the greatest attention to his studies, and his master, seeing this, put out his tongue in astonishment and said, "this boy is much too good to be wasted." So he cancelled the deed of purchase and set the boy free. In after-years he distinguished himself as a friend of the downtrodden and oppressed, and during the troublous times that marked the end of the Ming and the rise of the Ch'ing dynasty he

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 71 and 391 *seq.*



strenuously advocated the cause of the poor. Once he passed a certain ruffian who was waiting by the roadside to waylay travellers. This man was the most truculent swashbuckler in the whole countryside; but when he saw Wang Ch'i-jui, and recognised him, he lowered his sword. Subsequently through Wang's clemency this robber received a pardon for his crimes.

The name of the patriot Huang Ch'êng-tsung of the Ming dynasty is enrolled among both the *Hsiang Hsien* (Local Worthies) and the *Chung Ch'ên* (Loyal Officials). The records say that though he came of a poor family in Weihaiwei he showed a zealous and ambitious temperament even from the days of childhood. Having taken his degree, he was appointed to a post at Ch'ing-tu, where he distinguished himself as an able official. In 1638, when rebel troops were approaching the city, he placed himself at the head of the local troops and fought with great heroism for ten days. Unfortunately a certain military graduate entered into traitorous communication with the enemy and let them into the city. When Huang was told the bad news he decided that, though defeat and death were now certain, he was bound in honour to fight to the last. He had a brave young son of eighteen years of age, named Huang Chao-hsüan, who, learning what had happened, addressed his father thus: "An official can prove his loyalty by dying for his sovereign, a son his filial devotion by dying with his father." The two went out to meet the enemy together. Huang Ch'êng-tsung was shot dead by an arrow while he was fighting in the streets, and the son was slain at his father's side.

This was not the end of the tragedy. Of Huang's wife, Liu Shih, the story is told that as soon as news was brought her of her husband's death she immediately turned towards the north and made an obeisance in the direction of the Emperor. Then she took her little daughter and strangled her, and

immediately afterwards died by her own hand.<sup>1</sup> Her dying wish was that her little girl should be placed beside her in her coffin. Finally, a faithful servant of the family, named Huang Lu, seized a dagger and killed himself. And so, says the local chronicle, were brought about the pitiful deaths of a patriotic official, a filial son, a devoted wife, a loyal servant.<sup>2</sup> No one who heard the story but shed tears. The dead bodies were brought back to Weihaiwei and buried at Nai-ku Shan, to the north of Weihai City.

<sup>1</sup> A motive for this was doubtless the knowledge that the rebel soldiers would soon be turned loose in the captured city.

<sup>2</sup> Apparently the poor daughter did not count, either because she was a mere soulless infant or because her part in the proceedings was a passive one.



## CHAPTER V

### BRITISH RULE

WHEN negotiations were being carried on seventy years ago for the cession of Hongkong to the British Crown the only interests that were properly consulted were those of commerce. Military and naval requirements were so far overlooked that one side of the harbour, with its dominating range of mountains, was allowed to remain in the hands of China, the small island of Hongkong alone passing into the hands of Great Britain. The strategic weakness of the position was soon recognised; it was obvious that the Chinese, or any hostile Power allied with China, could hold the island and the harbour, with its immense shipping, entirely at its mercy by the simple expedient of mounting guns on the Kowloon hills. The first favourable opportunity was taken by the British Government to obtain a cession of a few square miles of the Kowloon peninsula, but from the strategic point of view this step was of very little use; and it was not till 1898 that the Hongkong "New Territory"—a patch of country which, including the mountain ranges and some considerable islands, has an area of several hundred square miles—was "leased" to Great Britain "for a period of ninety-nine years."

When, in the same year, arrangements were being made for the "lease" of Weihaiwei, no decision had been come to as to whether the place was to be made

into a fortress, like Hongkong, or merely retained as a flying base for the fleet or as a depôt of commerce : but to make quite sure that there would be enough territory for all possible or probable purposes the British Government asked for and obtained a lease not only of the island of Liukung but also of a strip of land measuring ten miles round the entire bay. The bay itself, with its various inlets, is so extensive that this strip of land comprises an area of nearly three hundred square miles, with a coast-line of over seventy miles ; while the bee-line frontier from the village of Ta-lan-t'ou in the extreme east to Hai Chuang in the extreme west measures about forty miles.

This land-frontier is purely artificial : in one or two cases, while it includes one portion of a village it leaves the rest in Chinese territory. This considerable area is under direct British rule, and within it no Chinese official has any jurisdiction whatever except, as we have seen,<sup>1</sup> within the walls of the little city from which the Territory derives its name. Beyond the British frontier lies a country in which the British Government may, if it sees fit, "erect fortifications, station troops, or take any other measures necessary for defensive purposes at any points on or near the coast of the region east of the meridian  $121^{\circ} 40'$  E. of Greenwich." The British "sphere of influence" may thus be said to extend from about half-way to Chefoo on the west to the Shantung Promontory on the east : but Great Britain has had no necessity for the practical exercise of her rights in that wide region.

Of the general appearance of the Territory and its neighbourhood something has been said in the second chapter. Hills are very numerous though not of great altitude, the loftiest being only about 1,700 feet high. A short distance beyond the frontier one or two of the mountains are more imposing, especially the temple-crowned Ku-yü hills to the south-west, which

<sup>1</sup> See p. 29.



are over 3,000 feet in height.<sup>1</sup> There are about three hundred and fifteen villages in the leased Territory under direct British rule; of these none would be described as a large village in England, and many are mere hamlets, but they have been estimated to contain an aggregate population of 150,000. Considering that agriculture is the occupation of all but a small portion of the people, and that large areas in the Territory are wholly unfit for cultivation, this population must be regarded as very large, and its size can only be explained by the extreme frugality of the people and the almost total absence of a leisured or parasitic class.

The Weihaiwei Convention was signed in July 1898. For the first few years the place was controlled by various naval and military authorities, of whom one was Major-General Sir A. Dord, K.C.B., but it can hardly be said to have been administered during that time, for the whole Territory beyond Liukungtao and the little mainland settlement of Ma-t'ou (now Port Edward) was almost entirely left to its own devices. The temporary appointment of civil officers lent by the Foreign and Colonial Offices led to the gradual extension and consolidation of civil government throughout the Territory. One of these officers was the late Mr. G. T. Hare of the Straits Settlements Government, and another—whose excellent work is still held in remembrance by the people—was Mr. S. Barton, of the British Consular Service in China. The appointment of Mr. R. Walter<sup>2</sup> as Secretary to Government shortly preceded that of Mr. (now Sir) J. H. Stewart Lockhart, Colonial Secretary of Hong-kong, as first civil Commissioner.

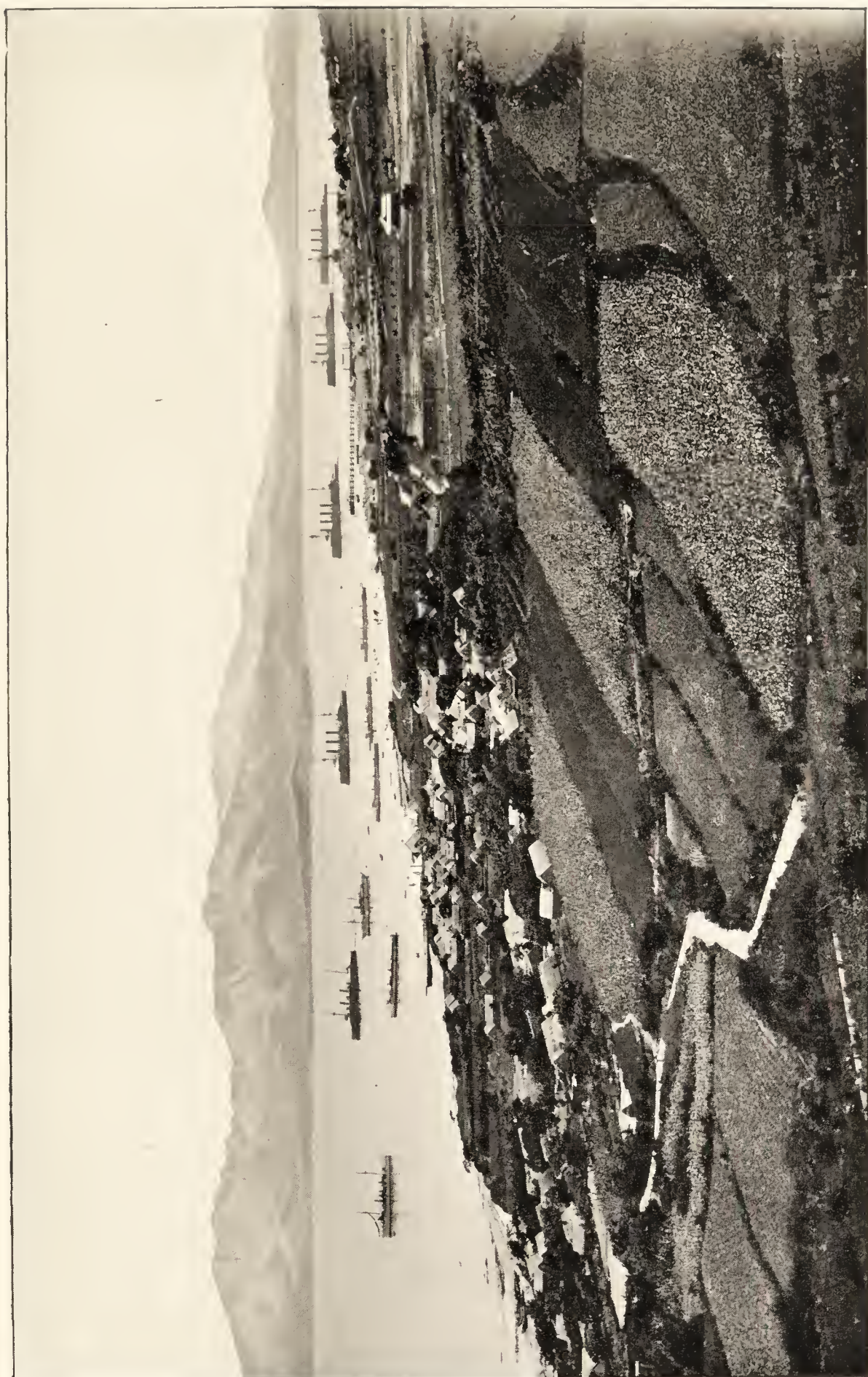
<sup>1</sup> Ku-yü Shan is the northern peak of the Ta K'un-yü hills, 40 *li* south-east of Ning-hai city. The highest peak is Ta Pei Ting (the "Great Pity Peak") or Ta Pai Ting (the "Great White Peak"). There are many temples and hermitages, some of unknown antiquity, others dating from the last decade of the ninth century A.D. There are also tablets and inscriptions of the Han dynasty (ending 220 A.D.).

<sup>2</sup> Formerly of the Federated Malay States Civil Service.

By this year (1902) Weihaiwei had been placed under the direct control of the Colonial Office, since which time it has occupied a position practically identical with that of a British Crown Colony, though (owing to technical considerations) its official designation is not Colony but Territory. The Commissioner is the head of the Local Government, and is therefore subject only to the control of His Majesty exercised through the Secretary of State for the Colonies. His official rank corresponds with that of a Lieutenant-Governor: that is to say, he receives (while in office at Weihaiwei) a salute of fifteen guns as compared with the seventeen of a first-class Crown-colony Governor (such as the Governors of Hongkong, the Straits Settlements, Ceylon and Jamaica), or the nine accorded to a British Consul in office. His actual powers, though exercised in a more limited sphere, are greater than those of most Crown-colony Governors, for he is not controlled by a Council.

As in Gibraltar and St. Helena, laws in Weihaiwei are enacted by the head of the executive alone, not—as the phrase usually runs elsewhere—“with the advice and consent of the Legislative Council.” The Order-in-Council indicates, of course, on what lines legislation may take place, and all laws (called Ordinances) must receive the Royal assent, or rather, to put it more accurately, His Majesty is advised by the Secretary of State “not to exercise his powers of disallowance.” This is in accordance with the usual Colonial procedure. In practice, as we saw in the first chapter, it has been found unnecessary to enact more than a very small number of Ordinances for Weihaiwei. The people are governed in accordance with their own immemorial customs, and it is only when the fact of British occupation introduces some new set of conditions for which local custom does not provide, that legislation becomes necessary. The legal adviser to the local Government is *ex officio* the Crown Advocate at Shanghai, and he it is who, when





*Photo by Ah Fong.*

THE HARBOUR WITH BRITISH WARSHIPS, FROM LIUKUNGTAO (see p. 81).





necessary, drafts the legal measures to be promulgated in the name of the Commissioner. Such measures are generally copied from or closely modelled on laws already in force in England or in the Colony of Hongkong.

The China Squadron of the British Fleet visits the port every summer. The fact that Weihaiwei is under British rule gives the Naval commander-in-chief perfect freedom to carry out target-practice or other exercises ashore and afloat under highly favourable conditions. But the greatest advantage that Weihaiwei possesses—from the naval as from the civilian point of view—is its good climate. It is perhaps not so superlatively excellent as some writers, official and other, have made out: but none will deny that the climate is “a white man’s,” and most will agree that it is, on the whole, the finest on the coast of China.

The rainfall is not, on the average, much greater or much less than that of England, though it is much less evenly distributed than in our own country. This is perhaps an advantage; there is no doubt that the average year in Weihaiwei contains a greater number of “fine days”—that is, days when the sun shines and no rain falls—than the average year in England. The other side of the shield shows us droughts and floods; how frequent and how destructive are these calamities may have been gathered from statements made in the last chapter. The winter is much colder and the summer much warmer than is usually the case in England: in addition to which both cold and heat are more steady and continuous. But there are not the same extremes that are met with in Peking and other inland places. The temperature in winter has been known to fall to zero, but the average minimum may be put at about 6° (F.). The snowfall is not great and the roads are rarely blocked. Skating, owing to the lack of rivers and lakes, can only be indulged in to a minute extent.

The winter north winds are intensely cold: even

the Chinese go about muffled up to the ears in furs. The autumn months—September to November—are the most delightful of the year. The heat and rains of summer have passed away and the weather at this period is equal to that of a superb English summer and early autumn. The spring months are often delightful: but this is the season of those almost incessant high winds that constitute one of the chief blemishes of the Weihaiwei climate. Yet they are as nothing compared with the terrible dust-storms of the Chihli plains, such as make the European resident in Peking wish himself anywhere else. July and August are the months of rain, damp, and heat: yet the temperature rarely goes higher than 94° (F.), and the summer climate is much less trying than that of Hongkong or of Shanghai. It is during those two months, indeed, that Weihaiwei receives most of its European summer visitors from the southern ports.

When the British Squadron and the European visitors leave Weihaiwei in or about the month of September, the place is left to its own resources until the month of May or June in the following year. From the social point of view Weihaiwei suffered severely from the disbandment of the well-known Chinese Regiment, the British officers of which did much to cheer the monotony of the winter months. A pack of harriers was kept by the Regiment, and hunting was indulged in two days a week during that period. From November, when the last crops were taken off the fields, and cross-country riding became possible, until the end of March, when the new crops began to come up and confined equestrians to the roads, hunting the hare was the favourite recreation of the British community. The Regiment itself, after undergoing many vicissitudes, was disbanded in 1906. During its short career of about seven years it proved—if indeed a proof were needed, after the achievements of General Gordon—that the Chinese, properly treated and well trained and led, could make first-rate soldiers.



The appearance of the rank and file of the Chinese Regiment on parade was exceptionally good, and never failed to excite admiration on the part of European visitors; but their soldierly qualities were not tested only in the piping times of peace. They did good service in promptly suppressing an attempted rising in the leased Territory, and on being sent to the front to take part in the operations against the Boxers in 1900 they behaved exceedingly well both during the attack on Tientsin, and on the march to Peking. Among the officers who led them on those occasions were Colonel Bower, Major Bruce, Captain Watson and Captain Barnes.<sup>1</sup>

At its greatest strength the Regiment numbered thirteen hundred officers and men, but before the order for disbandment went forth the numbers had been reduced to about six hundred. With the Chinese Regiment disappeared Weihaiwei's only garrison. A few picked men were retained as a permanent police force, and three European non-commissioned officers were provided with appointments on the civil establishment as police inspectors. These men, in addition to an already-existing body of eight Chinese on Liukungtao and twelve in the European settlement at Port Edward, constitute the present (1910) Police Force of the Territory, which now numbers altogether fifty-five Chinese constables and three inspectors.

Weihaiwei, then, is entirely destitute of troops and of fortifications, and in the long months of winter—when there is not so much as a torpedo-boat in the harbour—the place is practically at the mercy of any band of robbers that happened to regard it with a covetous eye. This state of things cannot be regarded as ideally good: yet—to touch upon a matter that might once have been regarded as bearing on politics, but is

<sup>1</sup> Captain (now Lieut.-Col.) Barnes has written a book entitled *On Active Service with the Chinese Regiment*, which should be consulted by those interested in the subject.

now a mere matter of history—it may be admitted that from the imperial point of view the abolition of the Chinese Regiment was a wise step. This view is not shared by most Englishmen in China: and as for the British officers, who had given several of the best years of their lives to the training of that regiment, and had learned to take in it a most justifiable pride, one can easily understand how bitter must have been their feelings of dismay and disappointment when they heard of the War Office's decision. Similar feelings, perhaps, may have agitated the mind of the "First Emperor" when the beautiful bridge to Fairyland, on which he had spent so much time and energy, began to crumble away before his sorrowing eyes. The position of the Chinese Regiment was not analogous to that of the native troops in India and in our other large imperial possessions. Its very existence was anomalous. The great majority of its men were recruited not in British but in Chinese territory,<sup>1</sup> and as their employment against a European enemy of Great Britain was scarcely conceivable, their only function could have been to fight against their own countrymen or other Orientals.

To persuade them to fight against China would necessarily have become more and more difficult as the Chinese Empire proceeded in the direction of reform and enlightenment. The Boxers, indeed, were theoretically regarded as rebels against China, so that Chinese troops in British pay could fight them with a clear conscience, believing or pretending to believe that they were fighting for the cause of their own Emperor as well as (incidentally) that of Great Britain. But the Regiment outlived the Boxer movement by several years, and the maintenance of a considerable body of troops (at an annual cost to the British taxpayer of something like £30,000) with a sole view to the possibility of a similar rising at some

<sup>1</sup> On the eve of disbandment, when the Regiment was some six hundred strong, only forty men were natives of the leased Territory.



uncertain date in the future was hardly consistent with British common sense. Moreover, its position in the event of an outbreak of regular warfare between England and China would have been peculiar in the extreme, inasmuch as the men had never been required, under the recruiting system, to abjure their allegiance to the Chinese Emperor. They were, in fact, Chinese subjects, not British. Even over the inhabitants of Weihaiwei, from whom a small proportion of the men was drawn, the Emperor of China retains theoretical sovereignty. This has been expressly admitted by the British Government, which has declared that as Weihaiwei is only a "leased territory," its people, though under direct British rule, are not in the strictly legal sense "British subjects."<sup>1</sup>

The officers of the Regiment would no doubt have denied that the loyalty of the men to their British leaders was ever likely to fall under suspicion, but the fact remains that in the event of an outbreak of regular warfare between China and Great Britain the Chinese authorities might, and probably would, have done their utmost to induce the men of the Regiment to desert their colours and take service with their own countrymen. Many methods of inducement could have been employed, over and above the obvious one of bribery. It is only necessary to mention one that would have been terribly forcible—the imprisonment of the fathers or other senior relatives of the men who refused to leave the British service, and the confiscation of their ancestral lands. The men who deserted, in these circumstances, would not, perhaps, feel that they had much to reproach themselves with. They had taken service under the British flag: but did that entitle them to become traitors to their own country, and to violate the sacred bonds of filial piety? Even if the Chinese soldier in British employment had been

<sup>1</sup> It follows that when they go abroad they have no right to the support of British consuls, though they have often claimed it and have sometimes been granted it through the courtesy of the consul concerned.

formally absolved from all allegiance to his own sovereign it would have been unreasonable to expect him to evolve a spirit of loyalty to a European monarch of whose existence he had but the vaguest idea, and to whom he was bound by no ties of sentiment.

But it may be urged that new conditions of service might have been devised, under which the men of the Chinese Regiment would have been exempted from the obligation of fighting against their own countrymen. Against whom, then, could they have fought? They might possibly have been led against the Japanese, but no one ever supposed for a moment that they were being trained with a view to action against a Power with whom Great Britain will probably be the last to quarrel: and in any case they would have been too few in number to be of effective service on the field, and by their inability to take an appropriate place among the other units they might even have been a source of embarrassment. As for the assistance they might have rendered in the event of an attack on Weihaiwei by any European Power, it is only necessary to point out that an infantry regiment would have been totally powerless to prevent the shelling of Weihaiwei by a naval force, and that if the British fleet had lost command of the sea, not only the entire Chinese regiment (or what remained of it after desertions had taken place), but Weihaiwei itself and all that it contained would have speedily become prizes of war to the first hostile cruiser that entered the harbour.

It may be said, in conclusion of this topic, that if the British Government had taken the cynical view that China was doomed to remain in a chronic state of administrative inefficiency and national helplessness, it would no doubt have been fully justified, from its own standpoint, in maintaining the Regiment. That it decided on disbandment may be regarded as welcome evidence that Great Britain did not, in 1906, take an entirely pessimistic view of China's future.



That the complete withdrawal of all troops was followed by no shadow of disorder among the people and no increase of crime, strikingly refutes the argument, sometimes advanced, that the real justification of the existence of the Regiment was the necessity of relying on a local armed force for the maintenance of British rule and prestige, which would otherwise have been outraged or treated with open contempt. No doubt the Regiment fulfilled a most useful function in suppressing or preventing disorder and in helping to consolidate British rule during the eventful year of 1900: and it may very well be that the people of the Territory then learned the futility of resistance to the British occupation. But it may be stated with emphasis that since the disbandment of the Regiment the people—perhaps from a knowledge of the fact that British troops and warships though not stationed at Weihaiwei are never very far away—have given no sign whatever of insubordination or restlessness.<sup>1</sup>

So far from crime and lawlessness having increased since that time, they have shown a distinct tendency to diminish, while no trouble whatever has arisen with the Chinese beyond our frontier. The significance of this will be realised by those who know how easily the official classes in China can, by secret and powerful means, foster or stir up a general feeling of antagonism to foreigners.

Perhaps it may not be out of place to mention here that the relations between the British officials of Weihaiwei and the Chinese officials of the neighbourhood have always been intimate and friendly: much more intimate, indeed, than those normally existing between the Government of Hongkong and the magistrates and prefects of the neighbouring regions of Kuangtung. The result is that through the medium

<sup>1</sup> As one reason for this it should be noted that the people still hold in vivid remembrance the Japanese march through their villages and fields in 1895. They have had some practical experience of modern warfare, and they are not anxious for more.

of informal or semi-official correspondence, and by personal visits, a great deal of business is satisfactorily carried through without "fuss" or waste of time, and that frontier-matters which might conceivably grow into difficult international questions requiring diplomatic intervention, are quickly and easily settled on the spot.

But it must be remembered that these friendly relations might at any time be interrupted by the Chinese officials if they were to receive a hint from the provincial capital or from Peking that the position of Great Britain was to be made difficult and unpleasant. One important reason why the people of Weihaiwei acquiesce with a good grace in British rule is their vague belief that we are in Weihaiwei at the request and with the thorough goodwill of the Chinese Government, and are in some way carrying out the august wishes of the Emperor. They still speak of us as the foreigners or "ocean men," and of China as *Ta Kuo*, the Great Country. When they erect stone monuments, after the well-known Chinese practice, to the memory of virtuous widows and other good women, they still surmount the tablet with the words *Shêng Chih*, "By decree of the Emperor." There is not the faintest vestige of a feeling of loyalty to the British sovereign, even among those who would be sorry to see us go away. Most of the people have but the haziest idea of where England is; some think it is "in Shanghai" or "somewhere near Hongkong"; others, perhaps from some confused recollection of the dark-skinned British troops who took part in the operations of 1900, suppose that Great Britain and India are interchangeable terms.

I have been asked by one of our village headmen (in perfect good faith) whether England were governed by a *tsung-tu* (governor-general) or by a *kuo-wang* (king of a minor state)—the implication in either case being that England was far inferior in status to China. Thus arises among the people the notion



that their own Emperor has for some mysterious reason, best known to himself, temporarily entrusted the administration of Weihaiwei to some English officials, and will doubtless decide in his own good time when this arrangement is to be rescinded. The notion does not, indeed, attain this definiteness, and the majority of the people well know from actual experience that no Chinese official, however exalted, has a shadow of direct authority in Weihaiwei at the present time ; but any attempt to persuade them that the Emperor could not, if he willed, cause the immediate departure of the foreigners would probably be a miserable failure. The long and short of the matter is that the Chinese of Weihaiwei acquiesce in British rule because, their sovereign, as represented by the Governor of Shantung, shows them the example of acquiescence ; but if diplomatic troubles were to arise between Great Britain and China, and the command, direct or indirect, were to go forth from the Governor that the British in Weihaiwei were no longer to be treated with respect, a few days or weeks would be sufficient to bring about a startling change in the direction of anti-foreign feeling among the inhabitants of the leased Territory.

Incessant troubles, also, would suddenly and mysteriously arise on the frontier ; the magistrates of the neighbouring districts, notwithstanding all their past friendliness, would become distant and unsympathetic ; difficulties internal and external would become so serious and incessant that it would be no longer possible to administer the Territory without the presence of an armed force. In the absence of a local garrison the Government would be compelled to requisition the services of the ever-ready British marines and bluejackets ; and His Excellency the Vice-Admiral, obliged to detach some of the vessels of his squadron for special service at Weihaiwei, might begin ruefully to wonder whether, after all, Weihaiwei was worth the trouble of maintenance.

This is a picture of gloomy possibilities which, it is to be hoped, will never be realised so long as the British occupation of Weihaiwei subsists. Unfortunately, diplomatic difficulties are not the only possible causes of trouble. If eastern Shantung were afflicted with long-continued drought and consequent famine—not an uncommon event—or if it were visited by some of those lawless bands of ruffians, too numerous in China, who combine the business of robbery and murder with that of preaching the gospel of revolution, the position of Weihaiwei would not be enviable. And parts of China, be it remembered, are in such a condition at present that almost any day may witness the outbreak of violent disorder. A small band of hungry and desperate armed men with a daring leader, a carefully-prepared plan and a good system of espionage—were it not for the Boy Scouts of the Weihaiwei School, who are fortunately still with us!—descend upon Port Edward, glut themselves with booty, and be in a safe hiding-place beyond the British frontier before noon the next day. Much more easily could any village or group of villages be ransacked and looted, and its inhabitants killed or dispersed: and the local Government, except by summoning extra assistance, would be powerless under present conditions to take any vigorous action.

Trouble of this kind is much more likely to come from the Chinese of some distant locality than from the people of the Territory itself. In one very important respect the British have been highly favoured by fortune. It happens that harvests in Weihaiwei for several years past have been on the whole very good, and the people are correspondingly prosperous. There has not been a really bad year since British rule began; moreover certain agricultural developments (especially the cultivation on a large scale of ground-nuts intended for export) have been beneficial to the soil itself, and are a steadily-



increasing source of wealth to the farmers. With the loose conceptions of cause and effect common to most peasant-folk, many of the villagers believe that the good harvests and general prosperity are somehow due to the "luck" of their alien rulers, of which they derive the benefit. The gods and spirits of the land, they imagine, must be satisfied with the presence of the British: is it not obvious that they would otherwise show their discontent by bringing a blight on the fields or sending a plague of insects?

Such is the popular argument, indefinitely felt rather than definitely expressed; and there is no doubt that it has had some effect in inducing a feeling of contentment with British rule. I have also heard it remarked by the people that since the coming of the English the villages have ceased to be decimated by the deadly epidemics that once visited them. A sage old farmer whom I asked for an explanation of the recent remarkable increase in the value of agricultural land explained it as due to the fact that the British Government had vaccinated all the children. This prevented half the members of each family from dying of small-pox, as had formerly been the case, and there was naturally an increased demand for land to supply food for a greater number of mouths! The medical work carried out by Government is doubtless of great value; but the reduced mortality among the people is probably chiefly due to the succession of good harvests, the increased facilities for trade, and the consequent improvement in the general conditions of life. A few successive years of bad crops may, it is to be feared, not only reduce the people to extreme poverty—for as a rule the land represents their only capital—but will also produce the epidemics that inevitably follow in the wake of famine. That such disasters may be expected from time to time in the natural course of events the reader will have gathered from the lists of notable local events given in the last chapter. When they come, the

people's faith in the fortune-controlling capacities of the foreigners may then suffer a painful shock, and the results may not be unattended by something like disaffection towards their alien rulers.

At the beginning of British rule in Weihaiwei many wild rumours passed current among certain sections of the people with reference to the intentions and practices of the foreigners. One such rumour was to the effect that the English wanted all the land for settlers of their own race and were going to remove the existing population by the simple expedient of poisoning all the village wells. In a few cases it was believed that the Government had actually succeeded in hiring natives to carry out this systematic murder; whereupon the villagers principally affected, growing wild with panic, seized and tortured the unhappy men whom they suspected of having taken British pay for this nefarious purpose. One man at least was buried alive and another was drowned. These cases did not come to the knowledge of the British authorities for some years afterwards, long after the well-poisoning story had ceased to be credited even by the most ignorant. One of them I discovered by chance as lately as the summer of 1909, though the incident occurred nine years earlier. An unlucky man who for some unknown reason was understood to be a secret emissary of the foreigners was seized by the infuriated villagers and drowned in the well which he was said to have poisoned. The well was then filled up with earth and stones and abandoned. The poor man's wife was sold by the ringleaders to some one who wanted a concubine, for a sum equivalent to about ten pounds.

No doubt the many horrible stories that were circulated about the foreigners were deliberately invented by people who, whether from some feeling akin to patriotism or from more selfish motives, were intensely anxious to arouse popular feeling against their alien rulers. Their plan failed, for popular



fury was directed less against the English than against those of their own countrymen whom the English were supposed to have bribed.

It may be said that on the whole the chief fear of the people in the early days of British administration was not that they or their families would be slaughtered or dispossessed of their property, or personally ill-treated, but that they would be overtaxed; and the disturbances which arose at the time of the delimitation of the frontier in 1899 and 1900 were in part traceable to wild rumours as to the means to be adopted by the foreigners for the raising of revenue. It was thought, for example, that taxes were to be imposed on farmyard fowls. Taxation has been increased, as a matter of fact, under British rule. The land-tax (the principal source of revenue) has been doubled, and licence-fees and dues of various kinds have had the natural result of raising the price of certain commodities. But these unattractive features of British rule are on the whole counterbalanced, in the opinion of the majority of the people, by comparative (though by no means absolute) freedom from the petty extortions practised by official underlings in China, by the gradual development of a fairly brisk local trade, by the influx of money spent in the port by British sailors, by the facilities given by British merchant ships for the cheap and safe export of local produce, and by the useful public works undertaken by Government for direct public benefit.

The amount spent on public improvements is indeed minute compared with the enormous sums devoted to these purposes in Hongkong, Singapore, and Kiaochou, yet it forms a respectable proportion of the small local revenue. That the construction of metalled roads, in particular, is heartily welcomed throughout the Territory is proved by three significant facts: in the first place the owners of arable land through which the new roads pass hardly ever make any demand for pecuniary compensation, unless they

happen to be almost desperately poor; in the second place, wheeled traffic, which a few years ago would have been a ludicrous impossibility in any part of the Territory, is rapidly becoming common; and in the third place the people, on their own initiative, are extending the road-system in various localities at their own expense. It may seem almost incredible that, in one case at least, certain houses that obstructed traffic in a new village road were voluntarily pulled down by their owners and built further back: yet not only did they receive no compensation from Government, but they did not even trouble to report what they had done. Very recently a petition was received praying the Weihaiwei Government to urge the Government of Shantung to extend the Weihaiwei road-system into Chinese territory, especially to the extent of enabling cart traffic to be opened up between the port of Weihaiwei and the neighbouring district-cities of Jung-ch'êng, Wên-têng and Ning-hai. The Shantung Government has been addressed on the subject by the Commissioner of Weihaiwei, and the Governor has smiled upon the project; though as he has since been transferred to another province it is doubtful whether anything will be done in the matter at present. So long as Weihaiwei remains in British hands the Provincial Government, naturally enough, has no desire to extend the trade facilities of that port to the possible disadvantage of the Chinese port of Chefoo.

On the whole, the more intelligent members of the native community in Weihaiwei may be said to be fully conscious of the advantages directly and indirectly conferred upon them by British rule, though this is far from implying that they wish that rule to be continued indefinitely. Some of them are even aware of the fact that they owe many of those advantages to a philanthropist whom they have never seen—the uncomplaining (or complaining) British taxpayer. The Territory is, in fact, so far from being self-



supporting that a subsidy of several thousands of pounds from the British Exchequer is required to meet the annual deficit in the local budget.<sup>1</sup> The Government is conducted on extremely economical lines, indeed expenditure has been cut down to the point of parsimony, yet it is as well to remember that from the point of view of local resources the administration is costly in the extreme. A large increase of trade would no doubt soon enable the local Government to balance its books without assistance from England, but there are no indications at present that such an expansion is likely to take place.

British colonial methods do not, as a rule, tolerate a lavish expenditure on salaries or on needless multiplication of official posts. In these respects Weihaiwei is not exceptional. There are less than a dozen Europeans of all grades on the civil establishment, and of these only four exercise executive or magisterial authority. Since 1906 the whole Territory has been divided for administrative purposes into twenty-six districts: over each district, which contains on the average about a dozen villages, presides a native District Headman (*Tsung-tung*) whose chief duties are to supervise the collection of the land-tax, to distribute to the separate Village Headmen copies of all notices and proclamations issued by Government, to distribute deed-forms to purchasers and sellers of real property, and to use his influence generally in the interests of peace and good order and in the discouragement of litigation. For these services he is granted only five (Mexican) dollars a month from Government, but he is also allowed a small percentage on the sale of Government deed-forms (for which a fee is charged) and receives in

<sup>1</sup> For details of revenue and expenditure, as well as trade returns and other statistics, the reader is referred to the *Colonial Office List* (published yearly by authority) and to the local Government's Reports which are printed annually and presented to both Houses of Parliament.

less regular ways occasional presents, consisting chiefly of food-stuffs, of which the Government takes no notice unless it appears that he is using his position as a means of livelihood or for purposes of extortion.

The land-tax is based on the old land-registers handed over by the Chinese magistrates of Wên-têng and Jung-ch'êng, and as they had been badly kept up, or rather not kept up at all, for some scores of years previously, the present relations between the land under cultivation and the land subject to taxation are extremely indefinite. It is but very rarely that a man can point to his land-tax receipts as proof that he owns or has long cultivated any disputed area. Only by making a cadastral survey of the whole Territory would it be possible to place the land-tax system on a proper basis. At present the tax is in practice (with certain exceptions) levied on each village as a whole rather than on individual families. For many years past every village has paid through its headman or committee of headmen a certain sum of money which by courtesy is called land-tax. How that amount is assessed among the various families is a matter which the people decide for themselves, on the general understanding that no one should be called upon to pay more than his ancestors paid before him unless the family property has been considerably increased.

The Chinese Government did not and the British Government does not make any close enquiries as to whether each cultivator pays his proper proportion or whether a certain man is paying too much or is paying nothing at all. It is undoubtedly true that a great deal of new land has been brought under cultivation since the Chinese land-tax registers were last revised, and that the cultivators are guilty of technical offences in not reporting such land to Government and getting it duly measured and valued for the assessment of land-tax: but these are offences which have been



condoned by the Chinese authorities in this part of China for many years past, and it would be unjust or at least inexpedient for the British Government to show greater severity in such matters than is shown on the Chinese side of the frontier. The British Government has, indeed, by a stroke of the pen doubled the land-tax, that is, it takes twice as much from each village as it did six years ago, so it may at least congratulate itself on deriving a larger revenue from this source than used to come to the net of Chinese officialdom. The total amount of the doubled tax only amounts to about \$24,000 (Mex.) a year, which is equivalent to not much more than £2,000 sterling. The whole of this is brought to the coffers of the Government without the aid of a single tax-collector and without the expenditure of a dollar. In the autumn of each year proclamations are issued stating the current rate of exchange as between the local currency and the Mexican dollar and announcing that the land-tax will be received, calculated according to that rate, upon certain specified days. The money is brought to the Government offices at Port Edward by the headmen, receipts are issued, and the matter is at an end until the following year. Litigation regarding land-tax payments is exceedingly rare and the whole system works without a hitch.

For administrative and magisterial purposes the Territory is divided into two Divisions, a North and a South. The North Division contains only nine of the twenty-six Districts, and is much smaller in both area and population than the South, but it includes the island of Liukung and the settlement of Port Edward. Its southern limits<sup>1</sup> extend from a point south of the village of Shuang-tao on the west to a short distance south of Ch'ang-fêng on the east. A glance at the map will show that it comprises the narrower or peninsular portion of the Territory. The headquarters of this Division are at Port Edward,

<sup>1</sup> See the blue line in map.

where is also situated the office of the Commissioner. The North Division is under the charge of the North Division Magistrate, who is also Secretary to Government and holds a dormant commission to administer the government of the Territory in the Commissioner's absence. The South Division comprises all the rest of the leased Territory, including seventeen out of the twenty-six Districts, and is presided over by the South Division Magistrate, who is also District Officer. His headquarters are at Wen-ch'üan-t'ang<sup>1</sup> or Hot Springs, a picturesque locality near the old boundary-line between the Jung-ch'êng and Wên-têng districts and centrally situated with regard to the southern portion of the leased Territory. Separate courts, independent of one another and co-ordinate in powers, are held by the North and South Division Magistrates at their respective headquarters.

The District Officer controls a diminutive police force of a sergeant and seven men, all Chinese. His clerks, detectives and other persons connected with his staff, are also Chinese. Besides the District Officer himself there is no European Government servant resident in the South Division, which contains 231 out of the 315 villages of the Territory and a population estimated at 100,000. The whole of the land frontier, nearly forty miles long, lies within this Division.

Under the Commissioner, the Secretary to Government and Magistrate (North Division), and the District Officer and Magistrate (South Division), are the executive and judicial officers of the Government. There is also an Assistant Magistrate, who has temporarily acted as District Officer, and who, besides discharging magisterial work from time to time, carries out various departmental duties in the North Division. The functions of the North and South Division Magistrates are quite as miscellaneous as are those of the prefects and district-magistrates—the “father-and-mother” officials—of China. There are no posts in the civil

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 53, 54, 70, 400.



services of the sister-colonies of Hongkong and Singapore which are in all respects analogous to those held by these officers; but on the whole a Weihaiwei magistrate may be regarded as combining the duties of Registrar-General (Protector of Chinese), Puisne Judge, Police Magistrate and Captain-Superintendent of Police. Most of the time of the Magistrates is, unfortunately, spent in the courts. Serious crime, indeed, is rare in Weihaiwei. There has not been a single case of murder in the Territory for seven years or more, and most of the piracies and burglaries have been committed by unwelcome visitors from the Chinese side of the frontier. But the Weihaiwei magistrates do not deal merely with criminal and police cases. They also exercise unlimited civil jurisdiction; and as litigation in Weihaiwei has shown a steady increase with every year of British administration, their duties in this respect are by no means light.

Beyond the Magisterial courts there are no other courts regularly sitting. There is indeed a nebulous body named in the Order-in-Council "His Majesty's High Court of Weihaiwei," but this Court very rarely sits. It consists of the Commissioner and a Judge, or of either Commissioner or Judge sitting separately. The Assistant Judge of the British Supreme Court at Shanghai is *ex officio* Judge of the High Court of Weihaiwei; but the total number of occasions on which his services have been requisitioned in connection with both civil and criminal cases during the last five or six years—that is, since his appointment—is less than ten. The Commissioner, sitting alone as High Court, has in a few instances imposed sentences in the case of offences "punishable with penal servitude for seven years or upwards,"<sup>1</sup> and the Judge has on three or four occasions visited Weihaiwei for the purpose of trying cases of manslaughter. The civil cases tried by the High Court—whether represented

<sup>1</sup> See *Weihaiwei Order-in-Council*, Clause 21 (3).

by Commissioner or by Judge—number only two, though the civil cases on which judgment is given in Weihaiwei (by the magistrates acting judicially) number from one thousand upwards in a year.

This curious state of things is primarily due to the fact that Weihaiwei, with its slender resources, cannot afford to support a resident judge, and has therefore to content itself with the help, in very exceptional circumstances, of one of the judges of a court situated hundreds of miles away; but the existing conditions, whereby the magistrates perform the work of judges, are legally sanctioned by a clause in the Order-in-Council, which lays it down that "the whole or any part of the jurisdiction and authority of the High Court for or in respect of any district may, subject to the provisions of this Order, and of any Ordinance made thereunder, be exercised by the magistrate (if any) appointed to act for that district and being therein."<sup>1</sup> The rights of the High Court are safeguarded by the declaration that it "shall have concurrent jurisdiction in every such district, and may order any case, civil or criminal, pending before a magistrate, to be removed into the High Court."<sup>2</sup> In practice, it may be said, all criminal cases except the most serious, and all civil cases of any and every kind, are tried in Weihaiwei by the magistrates of the North and South Divisions, acting either as magistrates merely, or as judges with the delegated powers of the High Court.

The Court of Appeal from the High Court of Weihaiwei (and therefore from the magistrates acting as High Court) is the Supreme Court of Hongkong. This arrangement has been in force since the promulgation of the Weihaiwei Order-in-Council in July 1901; yet during nine subsequent years not a single appeal has been made. This is due to three main causes: firstly, there are in Weihaiwei neither barristers nor solicitors

<sup>1</sup> See *Weihaiwei Order-in-Council*, Clause 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Clause 18 (1).





DISTRICT OFFICER'S QUARTERS (see p. 100).



THE COURT-HOUSE, WÊN-CH'ÜAN-T'ANG (see p. 98).





by whom litigants might be advised to appeal. Every party to a suit appears in court in his own person, and states his case either orally or by means of written pleadings called Petitions. If he loses his case the matter is at an end unless he can show just cause why a re-hearing should be granted. Secondly, the legal costs of an appeal to a Hongkong court would be prohibitive for all but a minute fraction of the people of Weihaiwei. It is questionable whether, outside Liukungtao and Port Edward, there are more than a dozen families that would not be totally ruined if called upon to pay the costs of such an appeal. Thirdly, there are probably not twenty Chinese in the Territory who are aware that an appeal is possible.

Apart from the magistrates, there are very few Europeans employed under the Government of Weihaiwei. There is a Financial Assistant, who also (somewhat incongruously) supervises the construction of roads and other public works and the planting of trees; and there are, as already mentioned, three Inspectors of Police. These officers (with the exception of one Inspector stationed at Liukungtao) all reside at Port Edward. Finally there are two Medical Officers, of whom one resides on the Island, the other on the Mainland. Such is the European section of the Civil Service of Weihaiwei,—a little body of sober and industrious persons who, like the members of similar services elsewhere, are frequent grumblers, who always consider themselves ill-used and their services under-estimated, but who will generally admit, if pressed, that the British flag floats over many corners of the earth less attractive and less desirable than Weihaiwei.

## CHAPTER VI

### LITIGATION

THE entire absence of both branches of the legal profession is perhaps (be it said without disrespect to the majesty of the law) a matter on which the people of Weihaiwei are to be congratulated, for it enables them to enjoy their favourite pastime of litigation at a minimum of cost. The cheapness of litigation in Weihaiwei is indeed in the eyes of many of the people one of the most attractive features of British rule: though, if only they could be brought to realise the fact, it is also one of the most dangerous, for it tends to diminish the authority of village elders and clan-patriarchs and so to weaken the whole social structure upon which village life in China is based. The people have discovered that even their most trifling disputes are more easily, quickly and cheaply settled by going to law than by resorting to the traditional Chinese plan of invoking the assistance of "peace-talkers"; for these peace-talkers are usually elderly relatives, village headmen or friendly neighbours, who must at least be hospitably entertained, during their lengthy deliberations, with pork and vegetables and sundry pots of wine, whereas the British magistrate is understood to hanker after no such delicacies. Thus while the people recognise, with more or less gratitude, the purity of the British courts and the readiness of the officials to listen to all



complaints, some of the wiser among them contemplate with some anxiety a system which is almost necessarily productive of excessive litigation and of protracted family feuds. There can be no part of the British Empire where litigation costs less than it does here, and indeed there is probably no part where it costs so little. There are no court fees, and the magistrate himself not only takes the place of counsel for both plaintiff and defendant, thereby saving the parties all legal costs, but also assumes the troublesome burden of the collection and investigation of evidence.

Until recently there existed a class of licensed petition-writers who charged litigants a small fee for drawing up petitions addressed to the court. After several of these petition-writers had been convicted of bribery and extortion and other malpractices, it was found necessary to withdraw all their licences and abolish the system. At present every litigant who cannot write and has no literary relative who will oblige him by drawing up a petition for him, simply comes into the court when and how he likes and makes his statement by word of mouth. Unlettered peasant-folk are garrulous and inconsequential all the world over, and those of Weihaiwei are not exceptional: so it may be easily understood that the necessity of taking down long rambling statements made in rustic Chinese by deaf old men and noisy and unreasonable women adds no slight burden to the labours of an English magistrate. Unnecessary litigation is indeed becoming so common a feature of daily life that the Government is at present contemplating the introduction of a system of court fees which, while not preventing the people from making just complaints before the magistrates, will tend to discourage them from running to the courts before they have made the least attempt to settle their quarrels in a manner more consistent with the traditional usages of their country. That something of this kind must be done to check the present

rush of litigants to the courts is daily becoming more apparent.

In the South Division court<sup>1</sup> the proceedings are carried on entirely in the Chinese language. The speech of the people, it may be said, is a form of Mandarin (so called) which after a little practice is easily intelligible to a speaker of Pekingese. Colloquialisms are naturally numerous among so remote and isolated a community as the inhabitants of northeastern Shantung, and in some respects the dialect approximates to that of Nanking rather than to the soft speech of the northern capital.

The absence of Counsel is no hardship to the people, for in China professional lawyers—as we understand the term—are unknown. “A man who attempted to appear for another in a Court of Justice,” as Sir Robert Douglas says, “would probably render himself liable to a penalty under the clause in the Penal Code which orders a flogging for any person who excites or promotes litigation.”<sup>2</sup> In Weihaiwei only once has a native—in this case a Christian convert—made the least attempt to conduct a case for and on behalf of another individual, and he, though it was impossible under British methods to have him flogged, was duly punished for this as well as for other offences. In the courts of Weihaiwei, then, as in those of China, each of the parties to a suit argues out his own case in his own way, though it is upon the magistrate himself that the duty devolves of separating the wheat from the chaff and selecting such parts of the litigant's argument as appear to have a real bearing on the points at issue. In all essentials, therefore, cases are heard and dealt with in Weihaiwei very much as they are heard and dealt with in China; thus a man from the Chinese side of the frontier who comes into court as plaintiff in Weihaiwei finds himself—especially if he is used to litigation in his own country—quite at home. As may be easily imagined,

<sup>1</sup> See p. 98.

<sup>2</sup> *Society in China*, p. 107.



lawsuits are not conducted with the frigid decorum that usually marks the hearing of a civil case in England; the facts that plaintiff and defendant appear in person, each to conduct his own case, and that each enjoys practically unlimited freedom to say what he likes about his opponent and about things in general, introduce a dramatic element which is lacking in the more stately procedure of Western law-courts. Instead of the patient discussion of minute points of law and the careful citation of precedents and authorities, there are clamorous recitals of real or imaginary woes, bitter denunciations, passionate appeals for justice. A rather remarkable feature of all this, however, is the absence of gesturing. Hands are not clasped or raised to heaven, the movements of the body show no signs of deep feeling, even the features—though their owner is inwardly seething with emotion—seem to remain almost passive. Is this a sign of remoteness from savagery? The people of England have been singled out as examples of those who make a minimum use of gesture: but Englishmen cannot be compared in this respect with the Chinese.

The side-lights that legal proceedings throw upon the moral and intellectual qualities of the people are inexhaustible in their variety. Under the stress of a burning sense of wrong or dread of disaster, or in the intensity of his anxiety to win a lawsuit on which he has staked his happiness, the Chinese, though he still refrains from what he considers the vulgarity of gesturing, casts to the winds the reserve and ceremonious decorum of speech that on more placid occasions often seem to be part of his personality. He can tell lies with audacity, though his lies indeed are not always rightly so called, and he has the most extraordinary aptitude for simulating strong emotions with the object of enlisting judicial sympathy; but, in spite of these drawbacks, it is during the prosecution of a lawsuit that the strong and weak elements in his character stand out in strongest relief.

If the litigant can write (though comparatively few of the people of Weihaiwei can do so) he is allowed to state his case in the form of a written petition. A typical Chinese petition may be said to be divided into three parts: firstly, the "case" of the petitioner is stated in full, strong emphasis being laid on his innate love of right and his horror of people who disobey the law; secondly, his opponent, the defendant, is held up to obloquy as a rogue and a hatcher of villainies; thirdly, the magistrate himself, to whom the petition is addressed, is cunningly described as having a marvellous faculty for separating right from wrong, a highly developed sense of justice, and a peculiarly strong love for law-abiding people. The defendant, when summoned, will of course adopt similar tactics. If his case is weak and he has nothing very definite to urge in his own favour, he will try to prejudice the magistrate against the plaintiff by describing him as quarrelsome and fond of law-suits—no small offence in China. His petition may then run somewhat in these words, which I translate from a petition recently received: "Plaintiff is an audacious fellow and cares not how often he goes to law. He is not afraid of officials and loves litigation. When he comes home from the courts he uses boastful words and says, 'What fun it is to go to law.'"<sup>1</sup>

Both plaintiff and defendant consider it a good plan to assume an attitude of weakness, docility, and a constitutional inability to contend with the woes thrust upon them by a wicked world. "For several years," says one, "I bore my miseries in silence and dared not take action, but now things are different, for I have heard the glad news that the Great Man<sup>2</sup> settles

<sup>1</sup> *Kuei chia shih shih yang yen i ta kuan ssü wei lo shih.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ta-jên.* The term *Ta Lao-yeh* (see p. 15) is more correct for a "father-and-mother" official, but *Ta-jên* implies higher rank, and the Chinese finding from experience that nearly all European officials are foolish enough to prefer the loftier form of address, wisely make use of it in addressing a foreigner whom they desire to propitiate.



cases as if he were a Spirit."<sup>1</sup> One of the commonest expressions in a Chinese petition has an odd look when it is literally translated: "I the Little Man am the Great Man's baby."

When a lawsuit arises out of complicated family disputes, such as those concerned with inheritance and adoption, there are sometimes representatives of four generations in the court at the same time. Babes and small children, if their rights or interests are in any way involved, are brought into court by their mothers, not with any idea that the evidence of infants would be accepted, even if it could be intelligibly given, but merely in order that the magistrate may see that the children really exist and have not been invented for the occasion. Sometimes they appear in the court for the practical reason that all the adults of the family have come to prosecute their lawsuit and that no one is left at home to take care of them. The presence of young boys of twelve or fourteen is very useful, as they are often able to express themselves and even to state the material points of a case far more briefly and intelligibly than their garrulous elders. If the case is an important one the court is often filled by cousins and aunts and interested neighbours of the litigants, and these people are all ready to swear that plaintiff or defendant, as the case may be, is a man of pre-eminent virtue who has never committed a wrong action or entertained an unrighteous thought in his life, while his opponent is a noted scoundrel who is the terror and bully of the whole countryside. These exaggerations are merely resorted to as a method of emphasising one view of the matter in dispute, and are not, as a rule, seriously intended to mislead the magistrate so much as to give a gentle bias to his mind. If, as very frequently happens, the magistrate has occasion to ask a witness why he has made a number of obvious and unnecessary misstatements, he merely replies with childlike blandness: *Ta*

<sup>1</sup> *Ta-jên tuan shih ju shên.*

*jên mien-ch'ien hsiao-ti pu kan sa huang*—"In the Great Man's presence the Little One would not dare to tell a lie."

When arguing out their cases in court litigants seldom lose their temper—always a sign of very "bad form" in China—but they often assail each other in very vigorous language. Men of some education often make a show of leaving it to the magistrate to unmask the evil nature of their opponent. "If the magistrate will only look at that man's face," they say, "he will see that the fellow is a rogue." The remark of course implies, and is intended to imply, that the magistrate is a man of consummate perspicacity who cannot be deceived.

What constitutes one of the gravest difficulties from a European point of view in settling civil disputes between Chinese is that the plain unvarnished truth is seldom presented, even when a recital of the bare facts would be strong enough to ensure a favourable judgment. Yet I am far from wishing to imply that the Chinese are naturally liars. An inaccurate statement unaccompanied by an intention to deceive does not constitute a lie; and many such statements habitually made by Chinese do not and are not intended to deceive other Chinese to whom they are addressed. That they often deceive a European is no doubt a fact; but the fault lies with the European's want of knowledge and experience of the Chinese character, not with the Chinese, who are merely using forms of speech customary in their country. Why should a Chinese be expected to alter his traditional way of saying things merely because it differs from the foreign way? I am not convinced that a Chinese intentionally deceives or tries to deceive his own countrymen—that is, lies to them—much oftener than the average European deceives or tells a lie to his neighbour. Before we say of a Chinese, "This man has told me a lie," it would perhaps be well to ask ourselves, "Is the statement made by this man in-



tended to deceive me? Is it such that it would deceive one of his own people?"

Perhaps it should not be necessary to labour this point, but there is no doubt that missionaries and others who feel irresistibly impelled to emphasise the darker sides of the Chinese character are apt to make the most of the supposed national predisposition to falsehood. For instance, the Rev. J. Macgowan in *Sidelights on Chinese Life*<sup>1</sup> says, much too strongly, "It may be laid down as a general and axiomatic truth, that it is impossible from hearing what a Chinaman says to be quite certain of what he actually means." On the other hand, I have known missionaries accept the word of their own Chinese converts, as against that of non-Christians, with a most astonishing and sometimes unjustifiable readiness. Some go so far as to imply that a non-Christian Chinese who speaks the truth is a person to be marvelled at. "*Albeit he is a Confucianist,*" wrote a missionary to me, "this man may be relied on to speak the truth."

The foreigner who wished to prove that the Chinese are liars might find abundant proof ready to his hand in the false evidence that is given every day in the Weihaiwei courts. Yet the longer and oftener he watched and listened to Chinese litigants and witnesses, the less satisfied would he become as to the reliability of his "proof." The English magistrate finds that as time goes on he becomes less and less likely to be deceived or led astray about any material point owing to the direct misstatements of witnesses. It is not so much that he "sees through" them as that he understands their points of view. To say that in due time he will be totally free from any liability to be misled would, of course, be to claim for him infallibility or omniscience; but there is no doubt that as his knowledge and experience of Chinese character grows, the less ready will he be to label the Chinese crudely as "liars." For the native magistrate, who knows without

<sup>1</sup> See p 2.

special training his countrymen's character and their peculiarities of thought and speech, it is, of course, much easier than it is for the European to detect the element of truth that lies embedded in the absurd and inaccurate statements made before him in court. To say that even a Chinese magistrate can always be sure when a man is speaking the truth would certainly be ridiculous; there are accomplished liars in China as in Europe, just as there are forgers so skilful that they can deceive experts in handwriting; but he is at least able to make allowances for inaccuracy and hyperbole which, though they may deceive the foreigner, will not deceive the native, and should not therefore be condemned as deliberate falsehood.

Instances of these exaggerations and misstatements occur every day throughout China and in Weihaiwei. If A wants redress against B, who has removed a landmark and encroached upon his land, he will probably add, in his petition, that B is the author of deep villainies, a truculent and masterful dare-devil, and a plotter of conspiracies against the public welfare. One such petition contained remarks which I translate almost word for word. "After I had discovered that he had stolen some of my land I went to his house and tried to reason with him in a persuasive manner. He refused to listen, and reviled me in the most shocking terms. He then seized my mother and my children and beat them too. They are covered with wounds and unable to stand; in fact, they are barely alive. So I had no resort but to approach the magistrate and ask him to enquire into the matter so that the water may fall and the rocks appear (that is, the truth will be made manifest), justice will be done to the afflicted and the cause of the humble vindicated, and the gratitude of your petitioner and his descendants will be without limit." The real point at issue was the disputed ownership of the land. No physical wounds had been inflicted upon any member of the family, and no fighting had taken place; but hard



words had been freely bandied about, and the female members of the family, as so very frequently occurs in China, had shrieked themselves into a paroxysm of rage which had left them exhausted and voiceless. To have taken the good man at his word with regard to the assault, and to have called upon him to produce evidence thereof, would have caused him pain and astonishment. All he wanted to do was to make out that his opponent was a rascal, and was therefore the kind of person who might naturally be expected to filch people's land.

But how, it may be asked, is the magistrate to know which is the true accusation and which is the false one? There are many indications to guide him, and a short cross-examination should elicit the true facts very quickly, even if the wording of the petition itself were not sufficient. In this particular instance it need only be pointed out that had a murderous assault really taken place, the victims would certainly have been brought to the court for a magisterial inspection of their wounds. Had they been unable to move they would have been carried in litters. That the wounds in an assault case should be shown to the magistrate as soon as possible after the occurrence is regarded as very necessary—and naturally so, considering how little value could be attached, in the present state of medical and surgical knowledge in China, to the evidence of a native doctor. Sometimes the court is invaded by a wild-looking creature with torn clothes and matted hair, who, judging from the blood on his face and head, must be covered with hideous gashes and gaping wounds. He begins to blurt out accusations of brutal assault against his neighbour; but before allowing him to pour forth his tale of woe, a wise magistrate will require him to be removed and well combed and washed. In all probability he will come back a new man, the picture of good health, and free from stain or bruise; and if he is asked to show his wounds, he will point to a long-

healed scar, or a birth-mark, or some slight scratch that might have been, and quite possibly was, inflicted by his neighbour's wife's finger-nails. Then, not in the least degree abashed, he will proceed to tell the tale of his real woes, and will make no further reference to the little matter of his physical ill-treatment.

The causes of litigation in Weihaiwei are endless, but a large proportion of the cases are the results of more or less trivial family quarrels. When a father has resigned the family property into his sons' hands and becomes dependent on them for support, he ceases to be the active head of the family. He must of course continue to be treated with obedience and respect, and very few fathers in China have any real cause to accuse a son of unfilial behaviour. But very old men, in China and elsewhere, often become petulant and hard to please, and it is they who, perhaps in a fit of temper, are the most likely to bring actions against their sons and daughters-in-law. An apparently crazy old man came to me with this story. "I am ninety-two years old. My son Li Kuei is undutiful. He won't feed me. I have no teeth, and therefore have to eat soft things, and his wife won't cook them for me." The facts (easily ascertained by the court) were that the old man's digestive powers were failing, and that being unable to assimilate even the softest of food, he erroneously fancied himself to be ill-treated. Having discovered that he had several nephews who were ready to protect him in the case of any real grievance, I informed him that out of consideration for extreme old age the court could not allow people of over ninety years old to prosecute their suits in person when they had relatives to do it for them. But if the poor man had lost his teeth, it was clear that the court had erred in supposing that he had also lost his wits; for after acquiescing in the ninety-year rule and going away without a murmur, he reappeared two days later and explained that he had made a stupid mistake about



his age: he was not ninety-two, but only eighty-eight.

The next case chosen as typical of Weihaiwei deals with a quarrel between a woman and her male cousin. "I have two houses," said the man. "I mortgaged one of them to my cousin (a woman), but subsequently redeemed it. Then I went to sea for several years. On coming home this year I found that she had treated the house as if it were her own, though I had long since redeemed it. She had also annexed some of my furniture. I told the headman. The headman said I had better let my cousin have her own way for the sake of keeping the peace. I agreed. But I have a nephew to whom I want to give the house. My cousin refuses to let him take possession." The difficulty about the house was duly settled by the court, but a few days later the plaintiff returned with further complaints. "I have now nothing to say against my cousin," he said, "except that she has stolen some more of my furniture—my cooking-pot, to be precise—and has torn down some of the thatch of my roof to light her fire with. She also reviles me in public and in private. I do not want her to be severely punished, but I should like her to be admonished by the magistrate."

Serious cases very frequently arise out of the most trumpery quarrels and differences of opinion between one villager and another. If men only are concerned in such a quarrel their own good sense, or that of their neighbours, usually prevents the matter from going to extremes, but if women are concerned, cases of homicide or suicide are sometimes the outcome. The question of the ownership of a few blocks of stone was the origin of a quarrel that might easily have had a tragic ending. The plaintiff's statement in court was as follows: "I accuse Chiang Tê-jang of beating my wife and myself. At sunset I went home and found that defendant had beaten my wife. I went to his house, and he met me at the door. I

reasoned with him, and said that if my wife had given any cause of complaint he should have told me about it. He replied that my wife deserved a beating. I asked him why he didn't beat me instead, whereupon he at once took me at my word and thrashed me soundly." In reply to questions he went on: "I did not strike him back, as I would not be guilty of a breach of the peace, and thereby appear to be holding the law in contempt. After I had been beaten I went home. My wife told me the defendant had beaten her because she refused to let him take away some stone from our backyard. The stone belonged to me." In answer to this the defendant stated: "I never struck plaintiff or his wife. The stone is my own. Plaintiff's wife was fighting with my mother, and my mother scratched her face. My mother got the worst of the fight. She is lying in a basket outside the court, as she is unable to move. I brought her here to have her wounds inspected by the magistrate."

The more intelligent members of the Chinese community of Weihaiwei soon discovered, after the arrival of the foreigners, that the British system of administration and of dealing with civil suits in the Courts differed from that of China in nothing so conspicuously as in the absence of "squeezes" and the ease with which the magistrate could be directly approached by the poorest litigant. There are always large numbers, however, who are afraid to bring their complaints direct to the court, either from a fear that they will be prevented by the police or other native employees of the Government from gaining the foreign magistrate's ear, or because they dare not openly bring a lawsuit or make accusations against some influential person or family in their own village. For the benefit of such timid individuals I long ago set up, on the roadside in the neighbourhood of the South Division court, a locked letter-box for the reception of any and every description of petition or memorial which the



writers for some reason or other preferred not to bring openly to the court. Into this box, the contents of which are examined by myself alone, petitions of various kinds are dropped almost daily: and though a large majority are anonymous denunciations of the private enemies of the writers, and are immediately destroyed, a considerable number have led to some discoveries of great value from the administrative point of view, and have sometimes greatly facilitated the labours of the court in ascertaining the rights and wrongs of pending cases.

If the petition-box served no other good purpose it would still be useful as throwing interesting lights on certain aspects of the character of the people. The petitions received through this medium are so heterogeneous that it is difficult to select a typical specimen for purposes of illustration; but the following translation of a document recently found in the petition-box may give some idea of the characteristic features of a large class.

“Your Honour's nameless petitioner humbly exposes the evil deeds of a brutal robber who is headman of the village of ——. He and his son ill-treat the people shamelessly. At ploughing time he continually encroaches upon his neighbours' lands, and if they question him on the matter his mouth pours forth a torrent of evil words and he reviles them without ceasing. He says, ‘I am the headman of this village and a person of importance. As for this trifling matter of your boundaries, I will treat you exactly as I please, for you are all my inferiors.’ On other occasions he says, ‘My family is wealthy; I have one hundred and thirty odd *mu* of land. In my house I have silver heaped up like a mountain.’ In our village there is a right-of-way to the well, which is situated on a slope at the edge of his land; but he has forbidden us to use this path any longer. In our village there is also an old temple called the T'ai-p'ing An, and there is an ancient right-of-way to it for the use of people who wish to burn incense

at the shrines. This path also he has blocked up. He declares that the spirits of the dead may use this road, but he will not allow living men to use it. Further, he says, 'If any one in the village refuses to obey me, let him beware! I am headman and have great influence, and if I were to fall upon you it would be as though the sacred mountain of T'ai were to fall and crush you.'

"Sometimes, also, he tells us that he will have us taken to the Magistrate's yamên for punishment. Thus we poor petitioners are afraid to put our names to this memorial. But we earnestly beg the Clear-as-Heaven Magistrate to enquire into this man's conduct and have him severely punished. Degrade him from the position of headman; lock him up in gaol for several years; inflict a fine of several thousand dollars upon him—he has plenty of money in his house. Thus will the people be made happy at last, and your petitioners' gratitude will endure through all ages to come. We implore the Clear-as-Heaven venerable Magistrate quickly to make investigations and to inflict punishment, and thus save the people and release them from their woes. Then not only through Weihaiwei will his fame roll like thunder, but the people who live in Chinese territory will all come to know how god-like are his judgments, and his reputation will shine with the combined brilliance of sun, moon and stars."

The magistrate is supposed to be a kind of living embodiment of all the Confucian virtues, and therefore to look with extreme favour on any one whose words or conduct show him to be dutiful to his father, punctilious in serving the spirits of the dead, respectful to old age, a wise and good parent, industrious, honest in his dealings with his neighbours, and law-abiding. No litigant neglects an opportunity of showing that he possesses each and all of these qualities; and sometimes it is done cleverly and with an appearance of artlessness. A man brought an action against another for debt. In the course of his statement he said: "Whenever I demand the money from him he



reviles me. (Cross-examined). I never reviled him in return. I didn't dare to do so because he had a beard and I had none. How could I dare to revile a man with a beard?" This of course means in plain language, "He was my elder, and therefore I with my well-known regard for the proprieties could not presume to answer him back." It is not usual in China for a man to grow a beard or moustache until he has reached middle age.

A litigant also tries to ingratiate himself with the magistrate by an affectation of extreme humility. A villager is asked if he can write. He says no. When it is subsequently discovered that he can read and write with fluency and he is taxed with his falsehood, he merely explains that he did not dare to boast of his accomplishments in the presence of the magistrate. The meaning is that the magistrate's scholarly attainments are (theoretically) so overwhelmingly brilliant that the litigant's own poor scraps of learning sink into utter nothingness by comparison. In other words, it is politeness and humility that impel the man to say he cannot write.

Among the cases that cause the greatest difficulty and sometimes embarrassment to an English magistrate are those that turn on some foolish old custom or deeply-rooted superstition. Sometimes it happens that by deciding the case one way the magistrate may be upholding a popular view at the cost of doing violence to his own feelings of what is right and proper; by deciding it in another way he may provoke a strong local feeling of resentment against the ignorant judgments of foreigners who do not understand the ways of the people. As a rule it is best to ascertain the views of the oldest and most respectable members of the village or district concerned, and give judgment accordingly. It is interesting to observe that the old folks will not in all cases give their vote for the pro-superstition view. A lawsuit of the kind referred to arose recently out of a dispute in a village

as to the digging of a well. The plaintiff's petition ran as follows :

"Near our village there is a well which supplies good water. As it was a long way to this well from the further end of the village it was decided some years ago to sink a new well opposite the house of Wang Lien-tsêng. This was done, and unfortunately soon afterwards a man was drowned in the new well. Then the elders discussed the matter and agreed that as the spot was evidently an unpropitious one for a well it must be abandoned. A new well was sunk near my house. Soon after this well was opened for public use my eldest boy took ill. He spat blood for seven months and then died. This was not the only piece of bad luck that befell me : I got into trouble somehow and was sent to gaol. This second well was then also filled up and abandoned. No more well-boring was undertaken for a long time, but recently there has been a fresh agitation among some of the villagers who say they must have a second well. I and the best people in the village think matters had much better be left as they are, as well-boring has been proved to be highly dangerous in our village. Wang Ming-hu is the principal agitator, and he declares that the well which started my misfortunes may be safely reopened, as three years have passed since the last time it caused death."

In this case the agitator—perhaps a trifle less superstitious than his neighbours—got his way, and the results do not seem to have caused any rise in the local death-rate.

No one who has lived in China requires to be reminded of the strange pseudo-science of *fêng-shui*, which includes among its various branches and subdivisions a method of divination whereby lucky sites are chosen for buildings of all kinds and especially for graves. A master-in-fêng-shui, as one might render the term *fêng-shui hsien-shêng*, is one who gives his services, not gratuitously, to persons who wish to find a propitious spot for the erection of



a new dwelling-house or (as in the case just quoted) the boring of a well or the burial of a deceased relative. The richer and more patient the client, the longer, as a rule, will the *hsien-shêng* take to complete his calculations, and the larger will be his fee.

A very important point to remember with regard to the selection of lucky sites for graves is that the solicitude is not only for the deceased but for the present generation and its descendants as well.<sup>1</sup> A carefully-selected burial-ground brings, it is believed, peace to the ancestors down in the Yellow Springs of the Underworld and also ensures an endless progeny of descendants who will enjoy wealth, distinction and longevity. The two words *fêng-shui* mean nothing more than "wind and water," but their esoteric connotation, if we were to do it justice, could hardly be elucidated in a whole chapter. Fêng-shui that was originally good may be ruined through a change in the course of a river, the erection of new buildings in the immediate neighbourhood, the opening-up of virgin soil, and through an endless variety of other causes.

The well-known Chinese dragon often plays a conspicuous part in matters relating to fêng-shui. To the true believer, indeed, the hills and rocks are not dead things, but animated with a mysterious kind of life which is apart from and yet has strange influences over the lives of men. Threatened disturbances of fêng-shui have frequently been the real or pretended cause of Chinese opposition to the opening of mines and the building of railways: and the popular feelings in the matter are so strong (though they are gradually weakening) that the official classes are obliged to treat the superstition with an outward respect which it is fair to say is on their part generally simulated. Yet it is by no means ignored by the highest in the land: the tombs of the Chinese imperial family are always selected after a most careful scrutiny of the spots

<sup>1</sup> See below, pp. 264 *seq.*

favoured by the best fêng-shui. The case to which I am about to allude arose out of a quarrel concerning the proposed opening of a stone-quarry in the vicinity of an ancestral graveyard. The dialogue that took place in court proceeded somewhat as follows, though the speeches are much abbreviated.

*Plaintiffs.*—We object to the quarry. The land is defendants' own and we do not claim any rights over it, but it is close to our ancestors' graves, and is certain to injure the fêng-shui. We should not object to a quarry on the far side of the hill, which cannot be seen from the graveyard. Our ancestors left word that if a quarry were opened on the far side it would not matter. Why don't the defendants go to that side?

*Defendants.*—The land belongs to us and our deeds are in order. We assert that plaintiffs have no right to interfere with our quarry, and we do not see how the fêng-shui of their graves can be affected. We don't go to the other side of the hill because there is no stone there.

*Plaintiffs.*—There is a dragon in the hill and it lives under the graveyard, and it extends to the place where the defendants have wickedly started to quarry. If the hill is cut into, the dragon will be hurt.

*The Magistrate.*—I do not think the dragon would raise any objections to the quarry. In fact he would no doubt feel much more comfortable if the stone were moved away. He probably finds it very heavy. In that case your fêng-shui would be immensely improved by the opening of the quarry.

*Plaintiffs (with perhaps the least suspicion of scorn at the foreign magistrate's ignorance).*—The stones in the quarry are the dragon's bones.

Hardly less important than the choice of a well-situated grave is the *ante-mortem* provision for a becoming funeral. It is well known that among the poorest classes the most acceptable present a dutiful son can give his father is a handsome coffin; and it is a real satisfaction to a humble labourer or farmer to



know that, however poor he and his family may be, there will be no doubt about his being laid to rest in a thoroughly respectable manner. The coffin—a large and most cumbersome article—is sometimes deposited during the owner's lifetime in a Buddhist temple, but this costs money; so it is frequently allowed to occupy an honourable corner in the family living-room, where it becomes the pride of the household and the envy of less fortunate neighbours. The presentation of a coffin to the head of a family by his dutiful and affectionate sons is sometimes made the occasion of an "At Home," to which are invited all relatives and friends who live in the neighbourhood. The visitors are expected to congratulate the proud father on his new piece of furniture and on his good fortune in possessing exemplary sons, to express unbounded admiration for the coffin, and to compliment the sons on the filial devotion of which they have just given so admirable a proof.

In Weihaiwei, litigation arising directly or indirectly out of disputes concerning coffins is fairly common, owing to the fact that timber is scarce and good coffins correspondingly expensive. The rights of ownership over a single tree or a group of trees are for this reason hotly contested, though the intention of using the timber for coffin-making is not always mentioned in the pleadings. One T'sung P'ei-yü made his complaint thus: "I was one of three sons. When the family property was divided between the three of us by our father's instructions, my eldest brother was given the house in which we had been brought up. But in the garden there was a fir-tree, and our father, before he died, specially declared that this tree was to be regarded as mine, in order that I might make myself a coffin out of it. The village headman can bear witness to this, and all the neighbours know that what I say is true. This happened seven years ago, and no one contested my claim to the tree until the tenth day of this moon, when I went

to the garden to cut it down. To my surprise I was stopped by my elder brother's wife, Ts'ung Liu Shih, who refused to let me touch it. I am a man of peace and dared not take the law into my own hands, so I appeal to the court for help." The end of the case was that some of the neighbours—doubtless sympathising with the plaintiff in his laudable and natural longing for a good coffin—offered to "talk peace," and there was an amicable settlement out of court. The plaintiff got his tree but had to spend the amount that a good coffin would have cost in entertaining his genial neighbours at a feast. What became of the elder brother's wife did not transpire.

From coffins to ancestral worship the transition is easy. Very numerous cases might be cited in which the magistrate is called upon to decide subtle questions—such as could seldom arise outside China—connected with adoption, inheritance, the guardianship of lands devoted to sacrificial purposes, and the custody of ancestral tablets. During a journey in western China I had some conversation with a missionary on this and allied topics. When I mentioned that the ancestral tablets were frequently produced in court as part of the evidence in a lawsuit and sometimes remained in the magistrate's custody for several days, the missionary remarked that he presumed I took advantage of such occasions to talk seriously to the "heathen" on the wickedness and folly of "idolatry." The fact that the people of Weihaiwei are still in the habit of appealing to the British courts for judgments in cases of this kind, is sufficient to show that the missionary's assumption was incorrect.

The Chinese magistrate being in theory the father of his district, he must not merely hold the balance between his people when they come to him with their quarrels; he must not merely punish the offender and vindicate the cause of the oppressed: he must also instil into the minds of his "children," by word and example, a submissive reverence for the doctrines of



the ancient sages, which include proper respect for tradition, a dutiful obedience to all properly-constituted authority, whether in family or in State, and the practice of courtesy and forbearance in all dealings with neighbours and strangers. Some of the most valuable of the Confucian maxims are summed up in the "Sacred Edict," which, though it only dates from the time of K'ang Hsi (seventeenth century), is entirely based on the Confucian teachings and is very well known—by name if not by its contents—to the vast majority of the Chinese people. Whether Chinese magistrates always fulfil their functions either as models or as teachers of virtue is a matter which does not concern us.

In Weihaiwei, where the King's Order-in-Council justifies a magistratè in giving effect to Chinese customs and practices, I have frequently, in delivering judgments in both civil and criminal cases, used appropriate texts taken either from the Confucian classics themselves or from the Sacred Edict, for the purpose of giving my hearers little moral discourses on points suggested by the cases before me. If, for example, two neighbours have quarrelled over some trifling matter I tell them of the wise words used by K'ang Hsi and his commentators with reference to the observance of harmonious relations among people who inhabit the same village. I remind them, perhaps, that "if fellow-villagers quarrel with one another and neither is willing to forgive, then the result will be a state of enmity which may not only last all their own lives, but may embitter the lives of their sons and grandsons, and even then peace may not ensue."

On one occasion on which I had quoted a passage from the Sacred Edict a local missionary pointed out to me that I could have found a far more appropriate text for my purpose by turning to a certain passage in the Bible to which he referred me. He was very probably quite right, though I did not verify his

Biblical reference : but it would no more occur to me, in addressing a crowd of Chinese from the magisterial bench in Weihaiwei, to read them passages from the Bible than it would occur to a judge in England to entertain the jury or the prisoner at the bar with quotations from the Zend Avesta or the Institutes of Vishnu. Is it not probable that an ordinary Chinese peasant will think more of his magistrate's ethical views and be more likely to profit by them if the magistrate bases his discourses on teachings which the Chinese and his ancestors have always been taught to hold sacred, rather than on strange-sounding quotations from a book he has never heard of?

From the examples given of some of the questions that come up for decision in the courts of Weihaiwei it may be seen that in this outlying part of the British Empire, no less than in India and the rest of our Asiatic possessions, the chief qualifications necessary for a judge or magistrate are not so much a knowledge of law and legal procedure as a ready acquaintance with the language, customs, religious ideas and ordinary mode of life of the people and an ability to sympathise with or at least to understand their prejudices and points of view. Perhaps no Englishman, no European or American, can hope to administer justice or exercise executive functions among Asiatics in a manner that will win universal approval. If he becomes too fond of the natives he runs the risk of becoming de-occidentalised. Morally and intellectually he becomes a Eurasian. He is distrusted by his own countrymen, he is not respected—perhaps regarded as rather a bore—by the natives over whom he is placed. But let the European who applies to another the epithet of “pro-native” enquire rigorously of himself whether his real ground of complaint is not this : that the person whom he criticises does not in all cases support the European against the Asiatic when the interests of the two are at variance, that he does



not necessarily accept the European point of view as the only possible or the only just one.

“How is it that you Government officials, as soon as you have learned the language and studied the customs of the country, become either mad or hopelessly pro-Chinese?” This is a question which in one form or another is frequently asked by unofficial European residents in China. It may be that there is something in the nature of Chinese studies that makes men mad, and indeed I have heard this soberly maintained by persons who themselves are careful to avoid all risk of contagion. But it never seems to occur to such questioners that there may be some solid reasons for the apparently pro-Chinese tendencies (they are generally only apparent) of their official friends: reasons based on the fact that the latter have discovered—perhaps much to their own astonishment—how much there is truly admirable and worthy of preservation not only in Chinese art and literature and even religion, but also in the social organisation of the Chinese people. If there is one statement about China that can be made with perfect assurance it is this: that if in the long process of reform she learns to despise and throw aside all the supports she has leaned upon for thousands of years, if she exchanges for Western substitutes all her ideals, her philosophy of life, her ethics, her social system, she may indeed become rich, progressive, powerful in peace and war, perhaps a terror to the nations, but she will have left behind her very much that was good and great, she will have parted with much that was essential to her happiness and even to her self-respect, she will be a stranger to herself. And what will be the outward aspect of the China of those days? Great industrial cities there may be; harbours thronged with ocean-liners and with great battleships flying the Dragon flag; miles of factories, barracks, arsenals and shipping-yards; railway trains, motor-cars and airships coming and going incessantly from province

to province; warehouses, banks and stock-exchanges full of myriads of buyers and sellers, each straining every nerve to excel his neighbour in the race for wealth. And where, in this picture of China's possible future, are the thousands of ancestral temples where to-day the members of every family meet to do homage to their honoured dead and to renew the bonds of kinship one with another? They are to be seen no more. In their place stand thousands of village police-stations.



## CHAPTER VII

### VILLAGE LIFE AND LAND TENURE

To enter into a detailed description of Chinese village life would take us far astray from the immediate purpose of this book, which is to place before the reader a picture of Weihaiwei and the manners and customs of its people. Many such manners and customs are indeed common to the whole Empire, and in describing them we describe China; others are, or may be, peculiar to eastern Shantung or to the districts in proximity to the Promontory. Indeed, the student of sociological conditions in various parts of Asia will perhaps observe how much there is in common, with respect to village organisation, between the people of Weihaiwei and those—for example—of many parts of the Indian Empire. Far apart as the races concerned are in origin, traditions, and geographical and climatic conditions, it is yet a fact that the village communities of Weihaiwei at the present day are, in some important respects, identical in structure with those of Burma, especially of Upper Burma as it was before the annexation to the British Empire.

In outward appearance, it must be confessed, a Weihaiwei village is a poor thing compared with a village on the banks of the Irrawaddy. At close quarters it is often offensive both to the eye and to the nostrils—for the peasantry of China are not a cleanly people. Seen from a distance, the village that

gives the greatest pleasure to a European observer is the village that is almost entirely hidden in a grove of trees. Not infrequently the villages have an almost north-country English appearance. The houses are built of roughly-hewn grey stone, of which there is abundance in the hills; the roofs are usually of thatch, though the temples and some of the better-class dwelling-houses are roofed with bluish-grey tiles. All buildings—even temples—have very plain exteriors, and were evidently constructed for use and not for outward show. There are no pagodas, and not much, except a few twisted gables, that reminds one of southern China. Apart from an occasional Chinese inscription cut on a block of stone (such as "May a lucky star look down on us") or a crude representation of the well-known figure of the *Yin* and *Yang* (according to Chinese philosophy the complementary forces and qualities of nature),<sup>1</sup> there is little to suggest Oriental surroundings. In the larger villages may be seen theatrical pavilions in front of some of the local temples, and these pavilions are often the most elaborate buildings, as regards architectural structure and ornament, in their respective neighbourhoods.

The Weihaiwei Territory contains, as already stated, about three hundred and fifteen villages and hamlets. Estimating the total area of the Territory at three hundred square miles, and allowing for a large hill-area of uncultivated barren land, we find that there are probably about three villages, on an average, to every two square miles of territory. No census has yet been taken, but the population was long ago estimated by the military authorities (when they surveyed the territory) at 500 to the square mile, which would give a total of close on 150,000. I am inclined to think this estimate was too high at the time it was made, though the present population, which has been steadily increasing during the last

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 262 *seq.*





"WE ARE THREE" (see p. 250).

p. 128]



VILLAGE OF T'ANG HO-HSI (see p. 128).





decade, may not be far from that figure. Continuing this rough estimate, it may be said that the North Division<sup>1</sup> of the Territory contains 100 square miles with 84 villages, and a population of 50,000; the South Division 200 square miles with 231 villages and a population of 100,000. There are no walled towns or villages with the exception of the so-called city of Weihaiwei, which is nominally under Chinese jurisdiction. There are six market centres, all of which are situated in the South Division with the exception of the first named: they are Weihaiwei city, Fêng-lin, Ku-shan-hou, Ch'iao-t'ou, Ts'ao-miao-tzŭ and Yang-t'ing. Market is held at each of these places on every fifth day.

All these markets are of old standing with the exception of that of Ku-shan-hou, which was established, or rather revived, in 1907. The most important of the markets are those at Weihaiwei, Ch'iao-t'ou, and Yang-t'ing. The merchandise sold includes all kinds of agricultural produce in addition to material for clothing, cooking utensils, and other household gear. Foreign cloth and fancy goods of a cheap kind have a small sale. Beasts of burden are bought and sold as occasion demands, but it is at the great annual fairs that they change hands in largest numbers. These fairs were originally held in connection with religious festivals, and, indeed, they are still semi-religious in character. Men and women, especially the latter, flock to the temples, which at other seasons are rarely visited, and burn incense before the image of their favourite saint or deity; religious processions are held—a great source of delight to the children, who are given an opportunity of “dressing up”; and thousands of fire-crackers are exploded in the temple courtyards. But it is the business aspect of the fairs that appeals most strongly to the male adults who attend them, for it is on these occasions that they hope to drive the best bargains in the buying and selling of

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 97–8.

oxen, mules, ponies, donkeys and pigs. A fair or *hui*<sup>1</sup> is held annually at most of the market centres and at a few other places. One of the largest is held every spring at T'ang-ho-hsi, close to the District Officer's headquarters, and another at Pei-k'ou, where there is a temple in a picturesque defile. Theatrical performances are always held on such occasions, in fact they constitute part of the religious element of the *hui*. Though the performances are secular in character they are known as *shên hsi*, which might be translated "divine" or "religious drama."

The drama (such as it is) provides the most popular of all forms of amusement among the agricultural classes. The actors are professionals, who wander from place to place seeking engagements. Contracts are drawn up by middlemen called *hsieh-hsi-ti*, and contain a concise statement of how many days the performances are to be given (generally three or four), how many actors are to take part in them, and what the payment is to be. The actors carry with them their own garments, false beards, masks and other "properties," while the stage is supplied by the village. The stone-built theatrical pavilions usually face northwards, towards the gateway of the temple with which they are connected. Temples, and the images in them, face the south: thus the gods, for whose benefit and in whose honour the plays are theoretically given, have a full view of the entertainment. The spectators stand between the temple and the stage. The performances (usually consisting of short separate plays) take place at intervals throughout the whole of each day.

There is very little originality in the plots of the pieces presented; they are all taken from or founded on well-known Chinese legendary episodes or on events described in famous historical novels. If this were not the case, the dramatic methods in vogue in

<sup>1</sup> The word may be translated as "a coming together." It is the usual word for a "society" or "club."





A TYPICAL THEATRICAL STAGE BELONGING TO A TEMPLE  
(see p. 130).

p. 130]



VILLAGE THEATRICALS (see p. 132).





agricultural China would have to be modified; for the dialogue cannot under present conditions be heard distinctly except by a limited number of the audience. Not to mention the gongs and cymbals of the orchestra, which frequently come into action at what appears to foreigners to be the wrong moment, the open air soon dissipates the players' voices, and the great body of spectators ("audience" is hardly an appropriate word) is apt to be somewhat restless, if not noisy. Female parts are generally taken by specially trained boys or young men, though actresses are no longer unknown in China. The acting is rarely good from a European point of view; on the contrary, it is very stiff and full of what seem to us ridiculous mannerisms. But it is unfair to judge of the histrionic art of China from what one sees at a country fair.

The frequent association of the drama with religion in China will naturally recall to the minds of students of English literature the miracle-plays and mysteries of the Middle Ages in Europe. But the analogy is not a very close one. The English drama, regarded historically, may be said to be English through and through. The changes it underwent were almost, if not quite, independent of the history of the drama on the Continent. The evolution of the drama can be traced step by step from its origin to its culmination in the hands of the great Elizabethans. In China the origin of the drama is doubtful; it is not (in its present or any similar form) of great antiquity, and dramatic writing has never taken rank as a very high form of art. Some of the elements of drama may probably be traced in the stately gesture-dances, combined with music, of which we read in some of the oldest Chinese books. Dances which are probably very similar to those performed at the courts of the ruling dukes in Confucius's time may be witnessed at the present day in parts of Further India. In the old Indo-Chinese capital of Vientian on the Mekong (now the capital of French Laos) I witnessed, in 1902, a

dance of this kind. By a stretch of the imagination it might have been styled a drama in dumb show, but with more dumb show than drama: a dance that aimed at expressing not so much the poetry of graceful movement as the poetry of successive states of more or less dignified repose.

The Chinese drama of to-day is still a drama of posturing and gesture: the player is for ever aiming at "striking an attitude." This is all the more remarkable among a people who in ordinary life consider gesture undignified and indicative of a lack of self-control. It can, I think, be explained only as a survival from the days when the Chinese drama consisted mainly of dance and music. The literary developments of the drama—if indeed they may correctly be described as developments—date only from the time of the Yüan dynasty (1280–1367), and the popularity of the drama among the people seems to have been only of gradual growth since that date. It was apparently an importation from Central Asia, and came to China with the Mongol conquerors. For some time this novel form of art was confined to Peking and the other great centres of Mongol power, and to this day the influence of Peking is shown in the very frequent employment of the Peking dialect even in provinces where that form of speech is unintelligible to the mass of the people.

A theatrical company may be engaged by any person or group of persons willing to pay the required expenses. A theatrical entertainment is not therefore necessarily connected with religion, though in Weihaiwei it is generally so—at least in name. Occasionally a villager who has acquired wealth in Manchuria or elsewhere makes a bid for local popularity by paying the whole expenses out of his own pocket; but as a rule the cost is met out of the common purse. This leads us to a consideration of the internal polity and fiscal arrangements of a Weihaiwei village, which must be clearly understood in



their main outlines if we are to arrive at any adequate conception of the manner in which the peasants of this district, as of nearly the whole of China, regulate their lives and allocate their rights and responsibilities.

Certainly the main interest of the Territory, especially for those interested in sociological questions, lies in the quiet and apparently humdrum life of the village communities. As that life is now, so it has been for unnumbered centuries. There is no manorial system, no "villeinage," no landlordism, no rack-renting. The people of Weihaiwei are practically a population of peasant proprietors, though proprietorship is vested rather in the family (using the word in an extended sense) than in the individual. Villages still bear, in very many cases, the name of the family that lived in them as far back as their history can be traced. Chang-chia-shan is the Hill of the Chang family; Wang-chia-k'uang is the Defile of the Wang family; Chiang-chia-k'ou is the Pass of the Chiang family; Yü-chia-chuang is the village of the Yü family.

There is an old story of a weary traveller in Scotland who, having arrived at a certain country town in the Border district late at night, and finding closed doors everywhere, called out, "Are there no Christians in this town?"—whereat an old woman popped her head out of an upper window and replied, "Nae, nae, we're a' Johnstones and Jardines here." The Scottish town at least had its two surnames; more often than not a Weihaiwei village has only one. There may be Chinese Johnstones or Chinese Jardines; but it is improbable that they will be found together in the same village in such an old-fashioned district as Weihaiwei. This is not, of course, universally the case. When a clan is starved out of existence or has emigrated in a body, or, owing to its paucity of numbers, has admitted immigrants, the village may gradually become the property of several unrelated families. It is then known as a *tsa hsing* village, or village of miscellaneous surnames. Its old

name may or may not be perpetuated. Mêng-chia-chuang, which ought to be the village of the Mêng family, is now the property of a well-to-do family or clan named Liang, and the Mêngs have disappeared.

As a rule we find in Weihaiwei either that each village is exclusively inhabited by the people of one name, who are all inter-related and address each other as brothers and uncles and nephews, or that one "surname" is in numbers, wealth and social influence greatly predominant over the others. Title-deeds and tombstones testify to the antiquity of many of the existing Weihaiwei families; many of the peasant-proprietors who share the land among them to-day are the direct or collateral descendants of the people who tilled the same fields in the days of the Sung, Yüan and Ming dynasties.

There are considerable numbers, however, whose ancestors were immigrants from other parts of China; some of these were military colonists, some were transferred by Government from other provinces as a result of political or social troubles connected with rebellions or famines. There are many well-known residents who themselves have never travelled beyond the boundaries of the Wên-têng and Jung-ch'êng districts, but who are well aware, from their carefully-preserved pedigree-scrolls, that their ancestors were brought hither by Government hundreds of years ago from provinces as far distant as Yünnan. The Roman Emperors, we know, frequently adopted a similar method of dealing with certain political exigencies, for they transferred whole bodies of people from one province of the Empire to another; but the fate of the transferred Chinese was better than that of many of the Roman provincials, for they retained their independence and did not become the serfs of overlords.

A typical village of Weihaiwei may be defined as consisting of a group of families all bearing the same surname and all tracing their descent from a single



ancestor or a single ancestral stock, each family in the group constituting a semi-independent unit, owning its own lands, possessing certain rights over a common tract of pasture-land and sharing in the rights and responsibilities connected with the upkeep of the Ancestral Temple<sup>1</sup> and its tablets,<sup>2</sup> the family burial-ground,<sup>3</sup> and any land or property that may have been specially set apart to provide for the expenses of religious ceremonies and sacrifices.<sup>4</sup> The more mixed a village becomes, that is, the greater the number of "surnames" that it contains, the more widely does it depart from the uniformity implied by this description. There may, for example, be several ancestral temples, several burial-grounds, many different patches of sacrificial land; though if the immigrants came from a village in the vicinity, and have left there the main body of their clan, it sometimes happens that they will still associate themselves with the parent-village rather than with that in which they live, and will therefore refrain from establishing new centres of ancestral worship.

The units of the village community are not individuals but families. Nothing is more important for an understanding of the wonderfully stable and long-lived social system of China than this fact: that the social and the political unit are one and the same, and that this unit is not the individual but the family.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Chia miao*.      <sup>2</sup> *Shén chu*.      <sup>3</sup> *Huo Ying-ti*.      <sup>4</sup> *Chi-t'ien*.

<sup>5</sup> As an indication of how widely sundered are the theory and practice of East and West in the matter of social organisation, D. G. Ritchie's *Natural Rights* (1903 ed.), pp. 259-60, may be consulted. "No real or positive equality in social conditions," says that writer, "can be secured so long as individuals are looked at in any respect as members of families, and not in every respect as members of the State alone." Yet in China, where individuals are in almost every respect regarded as members of families, and never dream of claiming to be members of the State alone, there is far greater equality in social conditions than there is in the individualistic States of the West! Let us hope for China's sake that this fact will not be overlooked by those young patriot-reformers who are casting about for ways and means of raising their country in the scale of nations.

It is well known that this family-system exists, or till recently existed, in nearly every Asiatic country; and that only within the present generation the advance of European influence and legal notions has in some parts of the Continent brought about a gradual tendency to Western individualism.<sup>1</sup>

But the European must not too hastily assume, when he sees individualism largely replacing the old family-system in such countries as Japan, that the wiser heads in those countries regard the change as being in all respects beneficial. Some of them are inclined to fear that the new system—though its adoption may possibly be necessary in order to supply their country with a certain brute strength which the old system lacked, and so to enable it to cope with European aggression—tends to the grievous injury of much that they believe to be essential to true civilisation. They do not welcome with enthusiasm the emergence above the social and political horizon of that strange new star—the self-contained individual. They contemplate with something like dismay the weakening or breaking of the old family bonds, which if they were sometimes a hindrance to personal ad-

<sup>1</sup> The family-system has of course existed in regions other than Asia. "In most of the Greek states and in Rome," says Sir Henry Maine (*Ancient Law*, 4th ed., p. 128), "there long remained the vestiges of an ascending series of groups out of which the State was at first constituted. . . . The elementary group is the Family, connected by common subjection to the highest male ascendant. The aggregation of Families forms the Gens or House. The aggregation of Houses makes the Tribe. The aggregation of Tribes constitutes the commonwealth." In another place (p. 126) he speaks of "the clearest indications that society in primitive times was not what it is assumed to be at present, a collection of *individuals*. In fact, and in the view of the men who composed it, it was *an aggregation of families*. The contrast may be most forcibly expressed by saying that the *unit* of an ancient society was the Family, of a modern society the individual." Had Maine been acquainted with the details of the social organisation of the Chinese he would have found a copious source from which to draw illustrations of his thesis, and would have perceived that the family-unit system is not yet to be spoken of as a vanished phase of social development.



vancement and had a cramping influence on the individual life, at least did much to keep within bounds the primitive instincts of selfishness and greed.

Even in Europe there are thinkers who have expressed doubts as to whether our Western individualism is not a terribly fragile and unstable foundation on which to build a vast social system; whether there are not already signs of decay in the very bases of our civilisation. The truth of the matter is that there are certain profound social problems which have never yet been solved either by the East or by the West. We are all yet in various experimental stages of social progress. It may be that if Western theories and ideals have soared to greater heights, Eastern theories and ideals have aimed at producing a greater fundamental solidity;<sup>1</sup> and that, the essential differences being so great, it is inadvisable for either hemisphere to press its ideals too persistently on the other, and dangerous for either to abandon its own ideals too hastily in deference to the other's teaching or example.

Most people have heard a great deal of the high standard of commercial honour that prevails among the Chinese. Testimony to this characteristic has been given so often by English merchants and others that it seems unnecessary to insist upon it. I will only say, in passing, that nearly all business transac-

<sup>1</sup> "The whole Chinese administrative system is based on the doctrine of filial piety, in its most extended signification of duty to natural parents and also to political parents, as the Emperor's magistrates are to this day familiarly called. China is thus one vast republic of innumerable private families, or petty *imperia*, within one public family, or general *imperium*; the organisation consists of a number of self-producing and ever-multiplying independent cells, each maintaining a complete administrative existence apart from the central power. Doubtless, it is this fact which in a large measure accounts for China's indestructibility in the face of so many conquests and revolutions."—PROF. E. H. PARKER in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (China Branch)*, vol. xl. (1909), p. 14.

tions between Chinese and Chinese, even those involving considerable sums of money, are in Weihaiwei still carried out by word of mouth. The point to be emphasised here is that the commercial honesty of the Chinese is to a great extent dependent on and the result of their theory of the relationship between the individual and the family, which theory is in turn based on the social doctrines (such as filial piety) which Confucius taught or sanctioned.

The Western individual who owes money and cannot or will not pay can always shoot himself or abscond or go bankrupt. He may leave a stigma on his family if it is known who his family are, but the debts were his own and his relations cannot be held responsible. But the identification of the interests and obligations of an individual with those of his family have in agricultural China this peculiar and socially beneficial result, that a man cannot dissolve his liabilities by such a simple process as going bankrupt or dying.<sup>1</sup> His rights are inherited by his sons : so are his liabilities. The law, it is true, limits a man's liability for an ancestor's debts to the extent of his own inheritance : but the rule of custom is sterner than the rule of law. In 1907 a man whom we will call Ku brought me a petition in which he stated that in the seventh year of Chia Ch'ing (one hundred and five years earlier) an ancestor of his had contracted a debt of three *tiao* (a sum which at the present day is worth five or six

<sup>1</sup> It must be understood that what is referred to is "custom" rather than law, and that these remarks are not always applicable to the business relations between Chinese and foreigners at the treaty-ports, where commercial intercourse is to a great extent conducted on Western lines. When an English banker declares (as he has declared) that the word of a Chinese is as good as his bond, he is paying a compliment not so much to the character of the Chinese people (who as individuals are no more though perhaps no less trustworthy than average Englishmen), as to the fundamental soundness of the Chinese social system. If that system is subverted, through the efforts either of foreign advisers or of Chinese reformers, the moral results may be disastrous beyond conception. Let there be evolution by all means : not revolution.



shillings) to a man Liu. Liu's descendant, rummaging among the family archives, had recently chanced to come across documentary evidence of this debt (the grimy little scrap of paper was produced in court) and he forthwith brought it to Ku, who had never heard of the transaction, with the suggestion that final settlement of this long-standing little bill was now eminently desirable. Principal and interest together then amounted to something like twenty times the original amount.

The reason why Ku brought his case to my court was not that he objected to this unexpected call upon his slender purse, for as it happened he had already paid the whole amount without a murmur; he merely came to suggest that as the original debtor had two direct living descendants besides himself, those two persons should be required to pay their fair shares of the ancestral debt. He wished to know the views of the court on the point before he demanded payment from them. The man might in law have repudiated this debt altogether: Chinese law does not and could not go as far as local custom in settling questions that directly or indirectly concern the honour of a family. Repudiation of an ancestor's debt is, however, as rare in a Weihaiwei village as is bankruptcy. Debts may go unpaid, but only at the risk of a "loss of face" that would in most cases cause the debtor much greater inconvenience and discomfort than the monetary loss.

Weihaiwei has as yet shown but little tendency to modify its semi-patriarchal social system as a consequence of its fifteen years of continuous contact with Western civilisation. The individual is still sunk in the family. He cannot divest himself of the rights any more than of the responsibilities that belong to him through his family membership. The Weihaiwei farmer has indeed so limited a conception of his own existence as a separate and distinct personality that in ordinary speech he continually confuses himself

with his ancestors or with living members of his family. Examples of this are of repeated occurrence in the law-courts. "I bought this land and now the Tung family is trying to steal it from me," complains a petitioner. "When did you buy it?" asks the magistrate. "Two hundred years ago," promptly replies the oppressed one. Says another, "My rights to the property of Sung Lien-têng are being contested by my distant cousin. I am the rightful owner. I buried Sung Lien-têng and have charge of his soul-tablet and carry out the ancestral ceremonies." "When did Sung Lien-têng die?" questions the magistrate. "In the fortieth year of K'ang Hsi" is the reply. This means that the deceased whose property is in dispute died childless in 1701, that plaintiff's ancestor in that year defrayed the funeral expenses and acted as chief mourner, that by family agreement he was installed as adopted son to the deceased and heir to his property, and that plaintiff claims to be the adopted son's descendant and heir. Looking upon his family, dead and alive, as one and indivisible, he could not see any practical difference between the statement that certain funeral rites had been carried out by himself and the statement that they had been carried out by a direct ancestor.

Another litigant, whose long residence abroad had had no apparent effect on his general outlook on life, came to me very recently with the complaint that on his return from Manchuria he had found his land in the possession of a neighbour. "I went to Manchuria as my family had not enough to eat," he said. "I came home this year and wished to redeem the land I had mortgaged before I went away. But I found it had been already redeemed by my neighbour, a cousin, and he refuses to let me redeem it from him." On being asked when he had mortgaged his land and emigrated, he replied: "In Chia Ch'ing 3"—that is, in 1798. He was merely identifying himself with his own great-grandfather.



In another case a man whom I will call A brought a plaint to the effect that he wished to adopt B, and that C for various reasons refused to allow this adoption to take place. On investigation it turns out that B is dead and that it is his infant son D whom A really wishes to adopt. B and D—father and son—seem to A merely different expressions, as it were, of the same entity. This does not mean, of course, that supposing B were still alive it would not matter whether B or D actually became A's adopted son. The rules of adoption in China are strictly regulated. A man cannot adopt any one he likes. Not to mention other necessary conditions, the person adopted must belong to the appropriate generation, that is, to the generation immediately junior to that of the adopter. In the case before us the infant D belonged to the proper generation, and his father B could not have been adopted. To our notions it seems all the stranger that A, knowing this, should have spoken of B when he meant D: yet this manner of speech is exceedingly common.

But after all, if we wish to assure ourselves that the individual is not regarded as an independent unit we must rely on stronger evidence than strange verbal inaccuracies. Perhaps the best and most convincing proofs will be found in the restrictions placed on the powers of the individual to dispose of real property.

It is necessary at the outset to lay stress on the fact that there is no evidence, so far as I am aware, of the former existence, in Weihaiwei or elsewhere in China, of agrarian communism. A village community may indeed possess a common tract of pasture-land, or common pasture or "fuel" rights over private hill-lands at certain seasons of the year,<sup>1</sup> or some arable fields may under certain conditions be cultivated by different persons or different families in turn: but

<sup>1</sup> As, for instance, after the silk worms have been taken off the scrub-oak bushes.

if we were to assume from this that all arable land was once owned in common and that individual or family proprietorship has only gradually superseded an old communistic system, we should be entirely wrong. Students of the laws and customs relating to land must be careful, as Fustel de Coulanges has clearly warned them, "not to confuse agrarian communism with family ownership, which may in time become village ownership without ceasing to be a real proprietorship."<sup>1</sup>

In China all land theoretically belongs to the Emperor and the land-tax paid by cultivators may be regarded, from one point of view, as rent payable by tenant to proprietor. The Emperor is the Son of Heaven (T'ien Tzŭ) and owns the whole Empire (literally "what is under Heaven"—*T'ien hsia*): *a fortiori* he is owner of every separate patch of tilled land that the Empire contains. But for the people of China the ultimate rights of the Emperor are a matter of legal theory only. In practice, land is privately owned in China just as it is privately owned in England; but whereas in England a land-owner may (if his land is not "tied up") exercise all the rights of absolute ownership quite regardless of the wishes of his nearest relations, not to mention his distant cousins, in China the individual land-owner cannot disregard the inextinguishable rights of his family.<sup>2</sup>

Be it remembered, moreover, that "family" does not imply merely a father and a mother with their children. It includes also nephews, grand-nephews, cousins of

<sup>1</sup> *The Origin of Property in Land*, transl. by M. Ashley, p. 151.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps it is hardly necessary to explain that a Chinese who cuts himself adrift from his family, or emigrates, or sets up in business in some distant town or in a foreign Settlement such as Shanghai, may and often does acquire real property under conditions that render him absolutely independent of his family or clan. The family-rights are not, indeed, extinguished: they are merely in abeyance owing to the difficulty or impossibility of enforcing them. Yet the theory of family-ownership is often—thanks to Chinese conservatism and clan-loyalty—fully recognised even in such cases as these.



several degrees, and in fact all who come within the description of *wu fu*, or persons on whose decease one must assume one of the five degrees of "mourning." In England, if a man's title-deeds are in order, and the land is free from encumbrances, no one will question his perfect right, as an independent individual, to sell his land how and to whom he chooses. It is unnecessary for him to consult relations, neighbours or friends. Now in Weihaiwei, which is a typical Chinese agricultural district, the man who tried to dispose of his landed property without fully discussing the whole matter with all the prominent members and "elders" of his village—or rather with those among them who are of the same surname and come within the *wu fu*—would find himself foiled at the outset, for no one would venture to run the risk of buying land that was being offered for sale in so peculiar and irregular a manner. Even if the purchaser, being a man of wealth and influence, were prepared to run all possible risks, who would be found to draw up the deed of sale? Who would take the place of the numerous relatives who always append their signatures to such documents as proof that all is in order? The would-be seller's title-deeds may be in perfect order; the land may have come down to him from his direct ancestors and his right to sell may be apparently incontestable. But he is not the less bound to satisfy his uncles and brothers and cousins, as well as his own sons, as to the reason for his desire to sell, and even if they agree that a sale is necessary (owing perhaps to the seller's debts) he is by no means permitted to dispose of the property by public auction or offer it to the highest bidder.

All his relatives, more or less in the order of their seniority or proximity, must be given the option of purchase, and if the price offered by an influential relative is considered fair by the general voice of the village or the clan, he must perforce accept it and be thankful or refrain from selling his land. The

theory that seems to lie at the root of this custom is not that the land is the common property of the clan but that the individual *per se* is only the limb of a body, and cannot therefore act except in accordance with the will of the organism to which he belongs; and that it is contrary to the interests of the family that a portion of the real property belonging to any of its members should pass into alien hands.

Absolute sales of land are, indeed, not regarded with favour even if conducted according to the "rules." They have grown common in Weihaiwei during the past few years, partly because the great increase in the value of agricultural land has tempted many to take advantage of a condition of the real-estate market which they think may only be temporary; partly because foreign occupation and other recent events have opened out new avenues of employment to large numbers of the people who are willing, therefore, to dispose of the little plots of land that are no longer their all-in-all; partly because many of the smaller land-holders are engaging in commerce or emigrating to Chihli and to Manchuria. For these and other reasons a good deal of land has changed and is changing hands, but the old custom whereby real property can be transferred only from relative to relative is still observed with very slight if any relaxation of its former strictness.

A Chinese deed of sale, carefully examined, throws an interesting light on the systems of land-tenure and the conditions under which transfer is permissible. Without going into technical details, which would be of small interest to the general reader, attention may be drawn to the fact that the reason why the seller is disposing of his land must always be stated. The theory seems to be that he should not want to sell his land, and that his desire to do so is highly regrettable if not reprehensible. The document therefore sets forth in detail that (for example) "Ch'i Tê-jang of Ch'i-chia-chuang, *being altogether without*



*money or means of subsistence*, is obliged to sell that piece of land measuring . . . *mu* in extent, bounded as follows: . . . , to his younger "brother" of the same generation [really a cousin] named Ch'i Shuan, to be held by him as his absolute property for ever."

To these clauses are appended any reservations or special provisions by which the purchaser is to be bound, and the deed closes with the statement that it is drawn up "in case hereafter there should be no proof of the transaction." Then follow the names and crosses of the witnesses, all of whom are members of the "family,"<sup>1</sup> the name of the writer of the deed, who is often a schoolmaster, and the name of the village headman, who is generally himself a relative. The witnesses, it will now be understood, are very far from being merely persons invited to testify to the execution of a deed. They have themselves been consulted at every step of the negotiations, it is they by whom the purchase price has probably been fixed, and their consent has been necessary before the deed could be drawn up or the land sold.

Mortgages in Weihaiwei, as probably in the rest of China, are much commoner than sales. A farmer will generally sell his land only because he must; he will mortgage it on very slender provocation. As a mortgage does not definitely alienate the land from the family, the customary rules regulating this transaction are much more flexible than those relating to sales. Sometimes a piece of land is merely mortgaged as security for a temporary loan, in which case the mortgagor remains on the land;<sup>2</sup> in other cases it is mortgaged because the owner is going abroad or because the opposition on the part of the family to a definite sale is too strong to be overcome. In such cases the rights of cultivation are transferred to the

<sup>1</sup> The Chinese word for "Family" (*chia*) is often more suitably rendered with the word "Clan."

<sup>2</sup> This is a customary, not a legal, arrangement.

mortgagee. In the great majority of cases mortgaged lands are subsequently redeemed.<sup>1</sup>

Some of the customs regarding redemption are rather curious, and strongly emphasise the theory that redemption is a duty which must be undertaken by another member of the family if the original mortgagor will not or cannot do it himself. For example, A and B are two brothers. They *fên chia*, that is to say they set up separate establishments, each taking his own share of the family property. A remains at home, quietly cultivating his farm, while B decides to emigrate to Manchuria. In order to raise some necessary capital he decides to mortgage his share of the family land; but as neither A nor any other relative can provide the amount of money he requires, he is obliged to mortgage his property to an outsider C—a man of different surname who lives in a neighbouring village. This man C takes possession of the land as mortgagee and cultivates it for some years. B meanwhile is in Manchuria, and no one knows how he is faring, or whether he is alive or dead. A now goes to C and tells him that he wishes to redeem the land mortgaged to B. It is obvious that according to strict legality the land should only be redeemed by the original mortgagor. B's name alone is on the deed: A had nothing whatever to do with the transaction. Yet, by custom, C must resign the land to A; not merely because A produces the mortgage-price, but because he is one of B's family.

Perhaps several years later B returns from Manchuria. He has money and wishes to redeem his land. He soon discovers that it has been redeemed by his brother A. His own rights of redemption, however, are still valid; he applies to A for the return of the land for the same price at which it was originally mortgaged to C. A must comply. If B has been absent many years and meanwhile the land has

<sup>1</sup> In Weihaiwei a mortgage is regarded as an out-and-out sale if the right of redemption is not exercised after a definite number of years.



greatly risen in value, A will probably give it up with a very bad grace. If the original mortgage-deed was badly drawn up or there are some doubts about what actually took place, A will perhaps refuse to surrender the land at all unless or until he is ordered to do so by the court. Litigation concerning transactions of this kind has been common in Weihaiwei of recent years. A man who mortgaged his land many years ago, perhaps at a time of famine and scarcity, for a ridiculously small sum, returns from abroad to find his land worth five or more times what it was worth then. He is naturally eager to redeem it, while the person in whose hands it now is—whether the original mortgagee or one of the mortgagor's family—is equally eager to retain it. The court in such cases naturally supports local custom, though there are sometimes bewildering complications which render it no easy matter to give a rigidly just decision. Deeds of sale and mortgage of real property used to be drawn up in an excessively vague and slipshod manner—the very boundaries of the land being either not mentioned at all or inaccurately; moreover nearly all such deeds were “white” deeds—that is to say they had not been put through the formal process of registration which would turn them into legal documents. To remedy this state of things (which was not to be wondered at in a district where ignorant peasants do their own conveyancing without legal assistance) certain recommendations were made some years ago which resulted in the adoption of a new system whereby all intending sellers and mortgagors of land are obliged to use an officially-stamped deed-form, on which spaces are provided for the proper description of land-areas and other necessary particulars. The forms are numbered and kept in counterfoil-books, and no deed can evade registration except through the negligence of Government clerks. Government has in this simple procedure a small but unfailing source of revenue, the magistrates find their

labours in the court simplified, and the people are greatly benefited by having more satisfactory title-deeds to their lands (or rather proofs of legal purchase and mortgage) than they ever had before.

If the Chinese restrictions on a man's freedom to dispose of his own property are regarded from the Western point of view as an intolerable and unjustifiable interference with the rights of the individual, let it be remembered that the Chinese system is expressly intended to protect the family rather than the individual. But even so, does it not safeguard the rights of the individual as well? If A has complete control over his land and can bequeath it or sell it to whom he chooses, what about his son B? The average Chinese villager is at birth a potential landed proprietor.<sup>1</sup> His share in the family inheritance may be small, but his wants, too, are small. One often hears of an Englishman's desire to "found a family," by which is generally meant that he aspires to a position "in the county." The "family" of a Chinese never requires to be founded: it is there already. He does not require to engage a searcher of records to find out who his ancestors were so that he may be provided with a pedigree: he will find all the necessary information in the Ancestral Temple of his clan.

Whatever the faults of the Chinese social system may be there is no doubt that in Weihaiwei it very largely accounts for the complete absence of pauperism (though no one is rich), for the orderliness of the people (nearly every one has a stake in the land and has nothing to gain and everything to lose from disorder), for the uninterrupted succession of father and

<sup>1</sup> This may be compared with Hindu custom. "The instant a child is born he acquires a vested right in his father's property, which cannot be sold without recognition of his joint ownership" (Maine's *Ancient Law*, p. 228). Cf. also Plato, *Laws*, xi.: "You cannot leave your property to whomsoever you please, because your property belongs to your family, that is, to your ancestors and your descendants." This is the Chinese theory precisely.



son in the homesteads, and for the long pedigrees attested by family graveyards and ancestral tablets. Certainly the family trees of many of the British Peerage or even of the English squirearchy and the chieftains of Scottish clans, would make a poor forest compared with those of the majority of the farmer-folk of Weihaiwei.

As a father cannot, except in exceptional circumstances, deprive his son of the family inheritance, it follows that a man's power of making a will is severely limited. The division of property between brothers may take place either after their father's death or while he is still living. The process is called *fên chia*,—Division of the Family. When brothers *fên chia* it means in general terms that each takes his share of the family inheritance and leaves the paternal roof: and the document which is drawn up to define and give effect to the agreement is known as a *fên-shu* or written statement of the details of division.<sup>1</sup> The share of each participating member of the family is clearly stated in the *fên-shu*, and each is given a copy of the document to hold henceforth as his title-deed. A *fên-shu* is in Weihaiwei generally drawn up by mutual agreement between brothers after their father's death. If the arrangement is made during the father's (or mother's) lifetime, a portion of the property usually remains in the parent's hands as *yang-lao-ti*—"Nourish-old-age land." After his or her death the *yang-lao-ti* is made to bear the cost of the funeral, and what remains is divided up among the heirs. A portion of the property is sometimes set aside as *chi t'ien* (sacrificial land) to be cultivated in turn by all the brothers participating in the division. Sometimes the father keeps no *yang-lao-ti* for himself but merely stipulates either that he shall

<sup>1</sup> The *fên-shu* being "neither secret, deferred, nor revocable," may be compared with the early Roman "Will," which was not a Will at all in the modern sense of the word. See Lord Avebury's *Origin of Civilisation* (6th ed.), pp. 486-7.

be supported by all his sons in turn or shall receive from them a fixed proportion of the produce of their several shares. The former of these arrangements works very well when the members of the family are in complete harmony with one another; but sometimes a discordant note is struck either by an unfilial son or (much more often) by one of the sons' wives, who perhaps fails to treat her husband's father with proper respect.<sup>1</sup> A woman in China, be it remembered, practically severs her connection with her own family when she marries; her husband's parents are henceforth regarded as her own, and she owes them just the same obedience and filial respect that are owed them by her husband. The *patria potestas*, in fact, is exerted not only over sons and grandsons but also over their wives. But in practice we find that sons' wives do not always, to put it mildly, show the meek and reverential obedience to their *kung-tieh*, or father-in-law, that Chinese law enjoins and public opinion considers desirable.

As the mother, no less than the father of a family, is made the object of ancestral "worship," it follows that she succeeds, nominally if not always actually, to her deceased husband's control over the family property. A widow is regarded as possessing a life-interest in her husband's lands, subject of course to the rights, actual or potential, of her sons. If the *fên-chia* has already taken place, all she can personally control is her *yang-lao-ti*. If, however, she enters into a second marriage, she must relinquish all her rights in her first husband's property. The reason of this is obvious. If widows were allowed to endow their second husbands with the property of the first, there would be a gradual disintegration of the system of family-ownership. There would no longer be any guarantee that the land would follow the "name."

If the "family-division" or *fên-chia* does not take place till after the father's death but during the life-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 199.



time of the mother, the deed of division or *fên-shu* must make reference to the fact that the transaction has received the mother's authorisation. The following may be taken as a very ordinary type of *fên-shu* in Weihaiwei:

"This *fên-shu* is made under the authority of Yü Ts'ung Shih.<sup>1</sup> There are three sons, of whom the second, Shu-yen, has been 'adopted out' to another branch of the family.<sup>2</sup> The following division of property is made between the eldest son Shu-tung and the third son Shu-shan. The division is necessary because the families of Shu-tung and Shu-shan have become so large that it is no longer convenient for them all to live together. With the knowledge and assent of their relatives they have drawn lots for the division of the property, and the result is as follows: Shu-tung's share is the plot of land . . .; Shu-shan's share is the family house, consisting of the three-roomed central building and two side-buildings of two rooms each, together with the garden and fields bounded. . . . This deed is made out in duplicate, in order that Shu-tung and Shu-shan may each possess an original and hold it as his just title to the property allotted to him. This deed is drawn up and attested by the clan-members so that none of the parties concerned may hereafter go back on the division of property herein described. If any one raises any complaint hereafter, let him be sent to the magistrate in order that he may receive punishment for the crime of want of filial piety (*pu hsiao*)."

Then follow the names of a number of attesting and assenting relatives, the name of the writer of the deed, and the date. Simultaneously a second deed, called a *ch'u tan* or Reservation of *Yang-lao-ti*, is very often drawn up in such terms as these:

"This *ch'u tan* is executed by Yü T'sung Shih. In-

<sup>1</sup> That is, Mrs. Yü née Ts'ung.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. pp. 205, 284 *seq.*

asmuch as her three sons have set up separate establishments, and one of them, namely her second son Shu-yen, has been adopted by another branch of the family, Yü Ts'ung Shih, with the knowledge and assent of the elders and relatives of the family, reserves to her own use that house situated . . . and that piece of land measuring . . . , for the purpose of providing for her support during life and for her burial expenses after death.<sup>1</sup> All that remains of this property after these charges have been met is to be equally divided between the first and third sons T'sung Shu-tung and Ts'ung Shu-shan. The second son, Ts'ung Shu-yen, has no share in or right to any portion of this property, as he cannot carry the family property away with him when he is 'adopted out.'<sup>2</sup> Lest there should be no proof of this transaction hereafter, this deed is drawn up and attested, and is to be preserved for future reference."

It will be seen from the first of these two documents that a method of dividing real property among brothers is the drawing of lots (*nien chu* or *chiu fên*). There is no system of primogeniture: all the brothers receive share and share alike. The process of lot-drawing is a very simple one. The family-in-council begins by dividing the property into a number of shares corresponding with the number of the beneficiaries. The shares are approximately equal in value: one may include the family dwelling-house and a small area of arable land; another share, containing no house, will comprise a larger area of land; and so forth. Descriptions of all the shares are written on separate pieces of paper, which are folded up or twisted into little bundles and thrown together in a heap. The second, third and fourth brothers, and so on down to the youngest, draw lots, each in the order of seniority; the sole remaining lot is thus left to the eldest brother. Each must be content with the piece

<sup>1</sup> *Shêng yang ssü tsang.*

<sup>2</sup> *Pu nêng tai ch'an ch'u chi.*



of land, or the house, or the vegetable garden, as the case may be, which is inscribed on his lot, though friendly exchanges are of course permissible. The eldest brother is so far from having a claim to a larger or better share than the rest that, as we see, he is not even entitled to draw the first lot: probably, indeed, it is to emphasise the principle of share and share alike that custom requires him to take the lot that is left to the last. The drawing of lots is not resorted to in cases where the shares are all equal and there are no preferences.

If as a result of repeated subdivisions the family property has become so small that there is not enough to "go round," or the family is so large that an equal division would leave each with too little for his support, the usual arrangement is for the entire property to be mortgaged or sold to the nearest relatives who are willing to buy. The cash proceeds are then divided equally among the brothers, who separate to seek their fortunes, each according to his bent. One may emigrate to Manchuria, or join his numerous fellow-provincials in the capital, another may set up a shop in the neighbouring market-village, a third may wander off to one of the great commercial ports on the coast, and seek employment under foreigners. The unsuccessful ones may possibly never be heard of again; the successful ones will probably return after many days to their native village and re-purchase or redeem the old family property.

The remarkable increase in the value of agricultural land that has taken place in the Weihaiwei Territory during the past few years is a pleasant symptom of the advancing prosperity of the people. The fact must be admitted, however, that the increase is to a considerable extent due to their economic backwardness. There is a serious want of local means for the satisfactory investment of capital. To purchase land is to the great mass of the population the only safe

way in which savings or profits can be employed. The consequence is that the land has now acquired a somewhat fictitious value, a fact which may come prominently into view if the people should be visited by some calamity such as a succession of bad harvests.



## CHAPTER VIII

### VILLAGE CUSTOMS, FESTIVALS AND FOLK-LORE

THE villages of Weihaiwei, so far as their domestic affairs are concerned, are somewhat like so many little self-contained republics, each with its own ancestral temple, its *t'u-ti miao*<sup>1</sup> or temple of the local tutelary spirit, its theatre, its pasture-lands, its by-laws, its graveyard, and its little band of elders under the leadership of the headman. There is no regular village council. The "elders" are simply the most influential or most respected of the inhabitants, and their number is elastic. When important matters arise, affecting the interests of the whole village, they discuss them in the headman's house, or in a temple, or in the village street under the shade of an old tree. Nothing is discussed with closed doors. The whole village, including the women and children, may as a rule attend a meeting of elders, and any one who wishes to air his views may do so, irrespective of his age or position in the village. The elders have few privileges that their fellow-villagers do not share, and the headman himself is only *primus inter pares*. His authority, like that of the elders, is chiefly derived from his position as head of the family or clan.

When all the people are bound together by ties of blood relationship, as is the case in a typical Weihaiwei village, the bonds of family life and the bonds

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 336, 371-7, 382, 386 *seq.*

of village life are one and the same. The senior representative of the senior branch of the family holds as a rule a double responsibility: as the head of the family he is the natural arbitrator or judge in cases of domestic strife or petty crime, and as headman of the village he is held, to a limited extent, responsible by Government for the good conduct of his fellow-villagers. It is true that in practice the headman is not always the senior representative of the senior branch of the family. Under British rule, indeed, every new headman is "confirmed" by Government and receives a *chih-chao*, or official certificate of appointment. This applies both to the District headmen<sup>1</sup> and to the headmen of villages. But in both theory and practice the headman is the chosen of the people. He may fall into the position with their tacit consent by virtue of the *patria potestas*, or in consequence of his wealth, strong personality or social prestige; or he may be definitely elected after a consultation among the heads of families.

The position of headman is not altogether enviable, and there is little or no competition for the filling of a vacancy. Sometimes, indeed, it is only after a village has been threatened with a general fine that it will make the necessary recommendation. This is especially the case since the establishment of British rule, for Government shows—or did show—a tendency in Weihaiwei to increase the headman's responsibilities without giving him any compensating advantages.<sup>2</sup> The headman, as such, has no very definite authority over the individuals of his village, but every individual is bound by rigid unwritten law to conform to the will of the *maior et sanior pars*, and to fulfil his duties to the community even if they involve his own discomfort.

It is true that the Chinese village cannot be said to

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 95, 289.

<sup>2</sup> The same tendency, with the same result, showed itself in Burma after the annexation to the Indian Empire.



possess corporate unity. Even in Europe the evolution of the "juristic person" was a slow process, and it is not likely that we shall find the developed principles of corporate existence amid the heterogeneous elements of village life in China, where there are no professional lawyers to interpret indefinite social facts by the light of definite legal fictions. Yet the germs of the theory of a *persona ficta* may perhaps be found in several features of the village-system. Most villages, for instance, possess funds which are collected and disbursed for the benefit or amusement of the inhabitants collectively; and we usually find in the typical village a strongly-developed sense of mutual responsibility and a general acceptance of the obligation to co-operate for common ends. A man was once accused before me of refusing to join his fellow-villagers in subscribing towards the expenses of the local *hui* with its inevitable theatrical performances. He admitted in court that he was in the wrong and undertook to contribute his proper share forthwith. Had this man been a Christian the matter would not have been so easily disposed of. It is well known that troubles have arisen in various parts of China through the refusal of Christian converts to subscribe towards their village entertainments on the ground that such entertainments were idolatrous or involved the performance of pagan ceremonies. When one understands a little of the Chinese village organisation one can see, perhaps, that there is something to be said on the side of the indignant "pagans," and that the trouble has not necessarily arisen from their hostility to the religious views, as such, of their converted fellow-villagers. It is obvious that the solidarity of the village system would be severely shaken if individuals were allowed to dissociate themselves at will from the actions of the village as a whole.

As the Village does not possess a strictly corporate character, it follows that though there may be pasture

lands, wells, roads, and other property which belong to all the inhabitants collectively, it would be inaccurate to say that the Village as such is the ultimate owner of, or has reversionary rights over any real property. If such rights seem to be possessed by any given village they will be found to rest on the fact that the village comprises a single family or clan—village and family being, in fact, almost interchangeable terms; but it is the family, not the village, that owns the land. If a village has two "surnames," say Liu and Ch'i, it will never be found that arable land is jointly owned by the Liu and the Ch'i families, though both families may have equal customary rights (not definable in law) over a tract of pasture-land. Another indication that the real entity is the family and not the village may be found in the fact that many old and long-established families "overflow," as it were, from their original villages into many neighbouring villages, and still possess a kind of unity entirely lacking to the villages as such. The Chiang family, to take a specific example, is the sole or principal family in the village of Chiang-chia-chai, but it is also the sole or predominant partner in at least five villages within a radius of as many miles. One outward sign of its essential unity consists in the old family burying-ground, in which all the Chiangs in all these villages have equal rights of sepulture.

The peace of an ordinary Weihaiwei village is not often seriously disturbed. The chief causes of trouble are bad-tempered women, who form an appreciable proportion of the population. Robbers and other law-breakers are few in number; not necessarily because the Chinese are by nature more honest and respectable than other people, but because the social system to which they belong is singularly well adapted, in normal times at least, to prevent the outbreak of criminal propensities. No village possesses any body of men whose special duty it is to act as a police force,





A DISTRICT HEADMAN AND HIS COMPLIMENTARY TABLET (see p. 289).



THREE VILLAGE HEADMEN (see p. 158).





yet it is hardly an exaggeration to say that every village is policed by its entire adult male population. The bonds of family and village life are such that every male villager finds himself directly or indirectly responsible for the good behaviour of some one else. The bad characters of every village soon become marked men. For minor offences, evil-doers are punished by their neighbours in accordance with long-standing rules and by-laws; if they are regarded as incorrigible, they are either expelled with ignominy from the family and clan to which they 'belong'<sup>1</sup> or they are handed over for punishment to the nearest magistrate. Every unknown stranger who arrives in a village is immediately treated with a disquieting mixture of hospitality and suspicion. He is not interfered with so long as he encroaches on nobody's rights, but all the villagers constitute an informal band of amateur detectives for the purpose of keeping an eye on his movements and ascertaining his intentions. He is regarded, in fact, as a suspicious character until he settles down and becomes a land-owner, and that—for reasons already explained—he can hardly ever hope to do.

There are curious old customs which seem to indicate that even the native of a village who returns home, after many years' residence abroad, must in some places go through a kind of formal re-admission before he is allowed to resume his position on the old footing of equality. A man once came to me with a complaint which, under cross-examination, he stated somewhat as follows: "I was nine years absent from my village. When I went home a few days ago, I was ordered by the people of the village to give a feast. I asked them to let me postpone it for a few weeks. They did not say they were glad to see me back. They insisted that the feast must be given at

<sup>1</sup> This process, whereby the expelled one ceases to enjoy the rights to which his birth entitles him, is known as *ch'u tsu*,—"expulsion from the clan."

once. I am quite willing to give it later on. It is a village custom. Any one who leaves the village and stays away several years must provide a feast for the heads of the village families when he returns. I have no fault to find with the custom, only I want a few weeks' grace."

Nearly all villages in Weihaiwei have certain police regulations which are made and promulgated by the local elders. They possess, of course, no legal sanction, though they are frequently brought to the British magistrates for approval and to be stamped with an official seal. They consist of lists of punishable offences, and the penalties attached to them: the money fines being imposed by the village or clan elders, and applied by them to local uses. There is a good deal of variety among these village regulations or *ts'un kuei* in respect of penalties, though the punishable offences are everywhere much the same. They always repay inspection, for they throw an interesting light on the local morality and the views held by the leaders of public opinion as to the relative seriousness of different classes of misdemeanours. A written copy of the *ts'un kuei* is usually kept in the family Ancestral Temple or in the headman's house. The following is a translation of one of these documents :

- |   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| “ 1. Trampling on or desecrating graves or allowing domestic animals to desecrate graves in the ancestral burial-ground . . . . . | 10 <i>tiao</i> . <sup>1</sup> |
| 2. Usurping portions of the common pasture land ( <i>mu niu ch'ang</i> ) or ploughing up portions thereof . . . . .               | 5 <i>tiao</i> .               |
| 3. Removing fuel from private land without permission, and cutting willows and uprooting shrubs and trees . . . . .               | 3 <i>tiao</i> .               |
| 4. Allowing mules, ponies, pigs, sheep, or other animals to feed on private ground without the owner's permission . . . . .       | 3 <i>tiao</i> .               |
| 5. Stealing crops . . . . .   | 5 <i>tiao</i> .               |
| 6. Stealing manure from private gardens . . . . .   | 3 <i>tiao</i> .               |

<sup>1</sup> A *tiao* is at present worth approximately eighteenpence.



- |   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| 7. Moving boundary-stones . . . . .   | 5 <i>tiao</i> . |
| 8. Obstructing or blocking the right of way<br>to the common pasture land . . . . . | 5 <i>tiao</i> . |

If any of the above offences are committed at night-time, the punishment is Expulsion from the Village.

If any person having committed any of these offences declares that he will die rather than pay his fine, let him be conveyed to the magistrate.

The following are exempted from punishment as being irresponsible for their actions and deserving of compassion: children under twelve, dumb people, and imbeciles."

Very serious offences, such as housebreaking, violent assault, homicide, and offences against morality are not mentioned in the *ts'un kuei*, as neither Chinese nor British law would recognise the power of the villagers to take upon themselves the punishment of such crimes. The very prevalent vice of gambling is sometimes but not always punishable under the *kuei*. It occupies a conspicuous place in the *kuei* published by the East and West villages of Ch'u-chia-chuang, of which the following is a translation:

" 1. Gambling:

- |   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| (a) The owner of the house where<br>gambling takes place to be fined  | 30 <i>tiao</i> . |
| (b) Each gambler to be fined . . . . .  | 5 <i>tiao</i> .  |
| (c) Persons of the village who gamble<br>outside the village, but within<br>the limits of the village lands, to<br>be fined . . . . . | 2 <i>tiao</i> .  |
| (d) Gamblers under fifteen years of<br>age to be fined . . . . .  | 2 <i>tiao</i> .  |

2. Any person who unlawfully digs up his neighbour's grass and shrubs, to be fined . 500 *cash*.<sup>1</sup>

3. Any person who steals manure from private gardens, if the offence is committed in daytime, to be fined . . . . . 500 *cash*.

<sup>1</sup> Half a *tiao*.

4. The perpetrator of the same offence, if it is committed at night, to be fined . . . 2 *tiao*.
5. Any person who steals crops from the fields or vegetables or fruit from private gardens, if he is adult, to be fined . . . 3 *tiao*.
6. Any child who commits the same offence, to be fined . . . . . 200 *cash*.

The above Rules have been made by the whole Village in council, and must be obeyed by every one, irrespective of age and sex. If any offender refuses to pay his fine the headman and elders will report him to the magistrate, who will be asked to inflict punishment."

The following is a translation of a similar document in which the penalties imposed are somewhat light; but in this case the *kuei* are of ancient date and the *tiao* was worth a great deal more than at present.

- " 1. Gambling . Fine levied according to circumstances.
2. Cutting trees and shrubs . . . . . 1 *tiao*.
3. Stealing crops . . . . . 1 *tiao*.
4. Gleaning in the harvest-fields without permission . . . . . 1 *tiao*.
5. Feeding cattle in a neighbour's field after harvest . . . . . 1 *tiao*.
6. Uprooting grass and shrubs . . . . . 500 *cash*.
7. Climbing over private walls and stealing manure or removing soil . . . . . 500 *cash*.
8. Stealing fuel at night . . . . . 5 *tiao*.
9. Stealing silk-worms or cocoons . Fine levied according to circumstances.
10. Knocking down chestnuts with sticks. 500 *cash*.
11. Allowing dogs to go on the *ts'an ch'ang* (silk-worm feeding-ground) and eat the silk-worms<sup>1</sup> . . . . . 500 *cash*.

Headmen and elders who are found guilty of any

<sup>1</sup> Silk-worms are fed on the leaves of the scrub-oak on the open hill-sides.



of the above offences will incur double the specified penalty.

If doubtful<sup>1</sup> characters enter the village and create a disturbance, the heads of all the families will hold a meeting to decide what is to be done with them."

We have seen that a large number of the villages of Weihaiwei are named after the families that inhabit them. But when a single prosperous family has "overflowed" into a number of other villages it is necessary to differentiate between them, and the names given have often some reference to the outward aspect of the locality. For example, the name Sha-li-Wang-chia means the village of the "Wang-family-who-live-in-the-sand." As a matter of fact this village is situated near the seashore amid rolling sandhills, so the name is appropriate enough. Similarly the name Sung-lin-Kuo-chia means "the Kuo family of the Pine-grove." There are also such village names as Willow-grove, Black Rock, Thatched Temple, North-of-the-Ku-mountain, North-of-the-Pheasant-hill, White-pony Village. Sometimes pieces of family-land are given fancy names for the convenience of identification. The *Ssü-lao-p'ou kou* is "the ditch of the dead woman," apparently because a female's corpse was once found there: but as this name struck the owner as being unlucky and likely to bring misfortune on his family, he changed the "tone" of the first word, which transformed the phrase into "the ditch of the four old wives."

Men have their nicknames as well as places. Such names generally emphasise the owner's moral or physical peculiarities, and are often highly appropriate. The name Liu T'ieh-tsui, for instance, means Liu of the Iron Mouth—an allusion to his argumentative nature and love of brawling. Chou Lū, or Chou the Donkey, implies just what it would imply in England. One man writhes under the name Yü

<sup>1</sup> Literally, "not clear" (*pu ming*).

Hsieh-tzŭ—Yü the Scorpion—because his neighbours look upon him as a poisonous creature. Another is known as Wang Ko-p'i-tzŭ—Wang Gash-skin—because he is possessed of a knife-like sharpness of tongue. Yet another is spoken of as Chang T'ien Tzŭ—Chang the Son of Heaven, or Chang the Emperor—because he is the tyrant of his village.

The food of the people, as everywhere in China, is largely vegetarian, but fish (dried and fresh) is naturally eaten by all classes in Weihaiwei, and pork is consumed by all except the very poorest. The Chinese, it seems clear, would willingly endorse the judgment given in the *Anatomy of Melancholy*, where we are told that "pork of all meats is most nutritive in his own nature." Rice—the staple food in south China—is something of a luxury, as it has to be imported. There is a kind of "dry-rice"<sup>1</sup> grown in Shantung, but it is not a common crop in Weihaiwei. The ordinary grain-crops are wheat, millet, maize, barley and buckwheat. The wheat is harvested about the end of June and early in July. Immediately after the harvest the fields are ploughed up and sown with beans. The land is cultivated to its utmost capacity, and it need hardly be said that the farmer takes care to waste no material that may be useful for manuring purposes. Most fields are made to yield at least three crops every two years, and as the rotation of crops is well understood it is seldom that land is allowed to lie fallow.

In recent years very large areas have been devoted to pea-nuts, which are exported from Weihaiwei to the southern parts in enormous quantities and have become a source of considerable profit. Vegetables are grown in large quantities and include asparagus, onions, cabbage, garlic, celery, spinach, beans and sweet potatoes. Fruit is not cultivated to any great extent, though there are apples, peaches, apricots, plums, pears, melons and some other varieties, most

<sup>1</sup> *Han tao mi*.



of which are inferior to similar fruit grown in England. The services of an English fruit-grower were obtained by the British Government of Weihaiwei during the years 1905-8 with the two chief objects of testing the suitability of the district for fruit-cultivation and inducing the people if possible to make fruit-growing an important local industry. Partly owing to lack of enterprise and to a want of familiarity with the conditions under which fruit could be exported or profitably disposed of, the people have not responded to the efforts of the Government with any enthusiasm; but that Weihaiwei is a suitable locality for fruit-growing as well as for the cultivation of many kinds of vegetables has been amply demonstrated. The grape-vine flourishes provided reasonable precautions are taken against insect-pests.<sup>1</sup> Of English fruits which do well in Weihaiwei are apples, pears, plums, black-currants and strawberries. Of the last-named fruit it has been reported that "English varieties grow and crop splendidly, and the fruit is equal in every way to first-class fruit of the same varieties grown at home. All the varieties introduced proved to be perfectly hardy without any protection whatever."

Weihaiwei is not without game of various kinds, though the want of sufficient cover keeps down the numbers of many game-birds that would otherwise thrive. Woodcock are rare, and pheasants rarer still; but partridges are to be found in certain localities such as the neighbourhood of Lin-chia-yüan, near Wên-ch'üan-t'ang, and other hill-districts. The coasts are visited by various kinds of duck and teal, wild geese are common enough in winter, and the wild swan has been shot occasionally; but the best sport

<sup>1</sup> The Government fruit-grower has recommended the Black Hamburgh, Muscat of Alexandria and Malaya—which ripen in succession—as the best varieties of table-grapes for Weihaiwei, while of wine-grapes the most satisfactory are the Mataro, Alicante Bouschet, Black Malvoise, Grenache, Zinfandel, Charbons and Johannesburg Riesling.

is provided in spring and autumn by the snipe. The record "bag," so far as I am aware, is ninety-five and a half couple of snipe in one day to two guns. The local Annals tell us that a small spotted deer, and also wild boar, used to be common among the hills of Weihaiwei, but they are now unknown. The Manchurian Muntjak tiger (*Felis brachyurus*) has also disappeared. Mount Macdonald and other wild parts of the Territory harbour a few wolves which occasionally raid the outskirts of a village and kill pigs and other animals. In seasons of famine, as we have seen,<sup>1</sup> the wolves of Weihaiwei have been something of a scourge, but they have greatly decreased in numbers in recent years. Foxes are occasionally seen, and there are said to be some wild cats. Hares are numerous, and until the disbandment of the Chinese Regiment they were regularly hunted with a pack of harriers.

Agriculture, fishing and the manufacture of a rough silk form the principal industries of the people. The silk-worms are fed not on the mulberry but, as already mentioned, on the leaves of the scrub-oak, which now covers large areas of mountain land that would otherwise be totally unproductive. One may often notice, about the months of June and July, small shreds of red cloth tied to the oak-shrubs on which the silk-worms are feeding. Red is the colour which betokens happiness and success, and rags of that colour when tied to shrubs and fruit-trees are supposed to act as charms, guaranteeing the success of the fruit and silk crops, and keeping away injurious insects. Men who are engaged in the work of *fang-ts'an*—putting out the worms on the oak-leaves—make success surer by adorning the front of their own coats with similar pieces of red cloth. They also invoke the sympathy and help of the *shan-shên*, or Spirit of the Mountain, by erecting miniature shrines to that deity.

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 56, 57.



If the Weihaiwei villages are not in themselves objects of beauty they are often surrounded by groves of trees which go far to conceal their less attractive features ; and many of the cottages have little gardens which if chiefly devoted to vegetables are seldom quite destitute of flowers. The peony, chrysanthemum, wild lilies and roses, spiræa, hibiscus, jasmine, sunflower, campanula, iris and Michaelmas daisy are all common, and a few experiments made since the British occupation prove that numerous English flowers such as the Canterbury Bell, mignonette, carnation, aster, wall-flower, geranium and many others, in spite of an uneven rainfall and extremes of heat and cold seldom experienced in England, find a congenial home in Weihaiwei. Many of the flowering plants are prized for their medicinal qualities, real or supposed. The sunflower-seed—as in India and Russia—is used as a food for both men and animals, and the leaves and stems are said to make good fodder. A little purple wildflower named *ching tzü* that grows on sandy soil near the seaside is in some localities eaten by women on account of its magical efficacy in giving strength to unborn children : but this superstition seems to be dying out.

The trees in the neighbourhood of villages and in graveyards are common property, and it is very rarely, therefore, that they are cut down : elsewhere trees are very few, and timber is so scarce that large quantities are imported yearly from Manchuria.<sup>1</sup> Some of the principal trees of the Territory are the fir (*Pinus Thunbergii* and *Pinus Massoniana*), ailanthus, *wu-t'ung* (*Paulonia imperialis*) and white poplar ; and there are also cypress, walnut, *ch'iu* (*Catalpa*), pomegranate, wax-tree,<sup>2</sup> the beautiful maidenhair tree

<sup>1</sup> The local Government—not very wisely from the point of view of sound economics—levies small “wharfage-dues” on imported timber.

<sup>2</sup> This is the *pai-la shu* so well known in Ssüch'uan in connection with the insect-wax industry, which is also carried on to a small extent in Shantung though not in Weihaiwei.

(*Salisburia adiantifolia*)<sup>1</sup> and the *huai shu* (*Sophora japonica*).

Among the trees introduced since the British occupation, the acacia, Lombardy poplar, laburnum, yew and some others thrive in the Territory, but the oak, sycamore, elm, birch, mountain-ash and many other trees well known in England have hitherto proved failures. From the present denuded condition of the hills one would hardly suppose that the people of Weihaiwei cared much for trees: yet as a matter of fact they value them highly for their shade and for their beauty. Public opinion is strongly averse to the wanton destruction of all trees and herbage. An illustration of this is given in the local records. "It is a very evil thing," says the *Weihaiwei Chih*, "to set fire to the woods and shrubs, and pitifully cruel to the living animals that are made to suffer thereby. In the Shun Chih period [about 1650] Chiang Ping and his sons used to behave in this dreadful manner at Li Shan [a few miles from Weihaiwei city]. They received numberless warnings but never would they depart from their evil courses. One day they were going home from market and lit a fire on the hillside. Suddenly when the fire had begun to blaze a fierce wind sprang up, and Chiang Ping and his three sons were all burned to death. This is a warning that men should take to heart."

The compilers of the *Jung-ch'êng Chih* sum up the character and manners of the people in a way that hardly needs amplification and shows what are the features that strike a Chinese observer as of special interest. "They are very simple and somewhat uncouth and unpolished," he says, "but they are

<sup>1</sup> Probably the finest specimen of the *ginkgo* or maidenhair tree in the Territory is that in the grounds of Pei-k'ou Temple. Besides being very tall, it measures fourteen and a half feet in circumference five feet from the ground. See p. 381 for remarks on another of these trees.



honest. They have some good old customs and show by their conduct that they are guided by the light of nature more than by learning. The men are independent and self-reliant; the women are frugal, modest, and are most careful of their chastity. If they lose that they hold life as worthless. The men till the land; the women spin. The people are stupid at business of a mercantile nature: merchants therefore are few. Many strangers from other districts live on the islands and in the market-centres.<sup>1</sup> In bad years when the harvests are scanty and there is a dearth of grain the hill-grasses and wild herbs are used as food. Clansmen, relatives, and neighbours take pity on each other's distress, hence one rarely hears of the sale of boys and girls.<sup>2</sup> . . . Betrothals are arranged when the principals are still in their swaddling-clothes, and thus (owing to deaths and other causes) marriages often fail to take place. Babyhood is certainly too early a time for betrothals.<sup>3</sup> There are too many betrothals between people of different districts: hence one may find women over thirty years of age still unmarried.<sup>4</sup> This tends to the grave injury of morals. When betrothals are discussed it is considered by all disgraceful to hold mercenary views<sup>5</sup> or to aim at riches and honours. It is also considered discreditable to give a girl to a man as a concubine."<sup>6</sup>

The "uncouthness" of the people must be under-

<sup>1</sup> For temporary purposes of trade.

<sup>2</sup> Sale of children by starving parents is a painful feature of famines in some parts of China.

<sup>3</sup> This criticism from a Chinese writer is interesting, when we remember that the practice is much the same throughout the greater part of the Empire.

<sup>4</sup> This is exceptionally rare at the present time. The overwhelming majority of women are married before the age of twenty-five.

<sup>5</sup> Mercenary views are held all the same.

<sup>6</sup> In proportion to the population there are very few concubines in Weihaiwei, and most of them are imported from Peking and other places.

stood in a relative sense only. In spite of the fact that the great majority are illiterate they possess in a marked degree the natural courtesy that characterises so many Oriental races. In considering this point with reference to Chinese in general one must not ignore the fact that they have been often guilty of rudeness and even savage brutality in their intercourse with Western foreigners; but to regard rudeness and brutality as permanent or prominent elements in the Chinese character would be absurd, for if such were the case every Chinese village would be in a chronic state of social chaos. Outbursts against foreigners, however inexcusable from a moral standpoint, are always traceable to some misunderstanding, to foreign acts of aggression or acts which the Chinese rightly or wrongly interpret as acts of aggression, or to abnormal political or social conditions for which foreigners are rightly or wrongly held responsible. Most unprejudiced foreigners are willing to admit that in normal times the Chinese are a singularly courteous people, except when they have taken on a veneer of Western civilisation in the treaty-ports<sup>1</sup> and have lost their national graces. If the Chinese behave politely to foreigners—whom they do not like—we may well suppose that in social intercourse with one another their manners are still more courteous: and this is undoubtedly true. Their rules of ceremony may

<sup>1</sup> It is a curious fact, and one never yet satisfactorily explained, that people of non-European races all seem to lose their native grace of manner after a period of contact with Europeans. This does not apply to Asiatic peoples (Indian and Chinese) only: it is apparently equally true with regard to certain African races. Miss Bleek, in a recent work published by the Clarendon Press under the auspices of the Royal Anthropological Institute, remarks that the Bushmen are by nature truthful, clean, honest and courteous. "Once another Bushman visited ours for a few days. He was so much rougher than the other that our man was asked why his friend was different. He said, 'Missis must excuse: this man lost his parents early and was brought up by white people.'"



seem, from the foreigner's point of view, too stiff and artificial, or exasperating in their pedantic minuteness. The European is inclined to laugh at social laws which indicate with preciseness when and how a mourner should wail at a funeral, what expressions a man must use when paying visits of condolence or congratulation, what clothes must be worn on different occasions, how a visitor must be greeted, how farewells are to be said, how modes of salutation are to be differentiated and how chairs are to be sat upon. But, after all, every race has its own code of polite manners, and rules that impress a foreigner as intolerably formal or as ludicrous seem quite natural to one who has been accustomed to them from his earliest childhood. The rules of Chinese etiquette may be stiff, but there is no stiffness about the Chinese gentleman—or about the illiterate Chinese peasant—when he is acting in accordance with those rules.

Gambling has been mentioned as one of the vices of the people. That this should be a common failing among the Chinese is not a matter of surprise, seeing that there is probably no race among whom the gambling instinct is not to be found. It is, perhaps, specially likely to develop itself strongly among a people who, through lack of general culture, are at a loss to find suitable occupations for their leisure hours. The Chinese, however, delight in games for their own sake, as is evident from their fondness for their own somewhat complicated forms of chess and similar games. Serious cases of gambling are of course punished by the law. A new penal offence is opium-smoking, which now can be indulged in only by persons who hold a medical certificate. According to the official lists prepared by the local Government, the number of people who may be regarded as inveterate smokers amounts to no more than (if as many as) one per cent. of the population: but there is a certain amount of secret smoking and doubtless a good deal of smuggling.

On the whole, it cannot be said that opium seems to have done any very serious harm to the health or morals of the people of this district,—not, at least, as compared with the havoc wrought by alcohol in England and Scotland. If the experience of Weihaiwei goes for anything, the view sometimes held that opium-smokers must necessarily become slaves to the drug is an erroneous one. Many persons who were in the habit of indulging in an occasional pipe of opium at festive gatherings have now abjured the seductive drug without a sigh, and—judging from a few rather ominous indications—seem inclined to take to the wine-pot as a substitute. It may be only a curious coincidence that while I have been obliged to punish only six Chinese for drunkenness during a period of about five years, all six cases have occurred since the establishment of the new anti-opium regulations in 1909.

The Chinese have great reverence for book-learning, but poverty and the necessity for hard work from an early age have made it hopeless for the Weihaiwei villager to aspire to erudition. Every large village and every group of small villages have schools, but they are attended only by a small though gradually increasing proportion of the village children. The schoolmasters, moreover, are neither a very zealous nor a very learned body,—not a surprising fact when it is remembered that they receive no more than a bare living wage. At present the proportion of villagers who can read and write is very small—probably under ten per cent.—and even the headmen are often unable to sign their own names.

Not much progress in education has been made under British rule, for the resources of the Government are meagre in the extreme. A Government school at Port Edward and one or two missionary schools provide elementary education for a few dozen children, but very little has been done to improve the village



schools. It need hardly be said that except in the Government and missionary schools the education, such as it is, is confined to the orthodox curriculum of "Old China": the flood of Western learning has not yet affected the little backwater of Weihaiwei except to the extent of rousing a certain limited interest in such subjects as geography and arithmetic.

Writing of present-day conditions, a Chinese diplomatist in the United States has stated that "John Stuart Mill, Huxley, Spencer, Darwin and Henry George, just to mention a few of the leading scholars of the modern age, are as well known in China as in this country. The doctrine of the survival of the fittest is on the lips of every thinking Chinese. . . . Western knowledge is being absorbed by our young men at home or abroad at a rapid rate, and the mental power of a large part of four hundred millions of people, formerly concentrated on the Confucian classics, is being turned in a new direction—the study of the civilisation of the West."<sup>1</sup> These remarks are true enough of a large and rapidly growing number of the Chinese people: but Weihaiwei and the neighbouring regions have more in common with the Old China that is passing away than with the New China that is coming and to come.

The ignorance of the people of Weihaiwei is naturally accompanied by many strange fancies and crude superstitions. Some of these must be considered when we are dealing with the religious ideas of the people; here it will be sufficient to mention a few of the miscellaneous notions that seem to be connected with no definite religious faith. There are, of course, ghosts and devils of many kinds and of varying degrees of malevolence. One means of protecting oneself against these dreadful creatures is to engage a fortune-teller or a Taoist priest to provide

<sup>1</sup> *The United States and China*, by Wei-ching W. Yen (American Association for International Conciliation: New York).

a charm (*fu*),<sup>1</sup> the mere presence of which is supposed to throw a whole army of demons into helpless confusion. Children, it is thought, are specially liable to injury from evil spirits, and many of them have charms or talismans carefully sewn into their clothes. A piece of red cloth or a few scarlet threads woven into the queue are understood to answer the purpose nearly as well. A disagreeable monster called the Celestial Dog (*T'ien Kou*) is supposed to be the cause of ill-temper and petulance in small children; but even he can be got rid of by nailing a cunningly-prepared charm above the afflicted child's bed. It is curious that a dog (a black one) also plays an undignified part in the nursery-mythology of our own happy land. Whether the Western dog would yield to the same treatment as the Eastern one is a question that might easily be solved by any parent who is prepared to make use of the charm here reproduced.<sup>2</sup>

Weihaiwei also has its witches (*wu p'o*) and diviners (often called *suan kua hsien-shêng*), who by acting as trance-mediums between the living and the dead, or by manipulating little wands of bamboo or peach-wood,<sup>3</sup> or by the use of a kind of *planchette*, profess to be able to foretell the future<sup>4</sup> or to answer questions regarding the present and past, or to disclose where stolen property has been concealed and by whom it has been taken. I have personally known of a case in which a thief was captured by means of the indications given by a fortune-teller. His method was to take a small stick in each hand and point

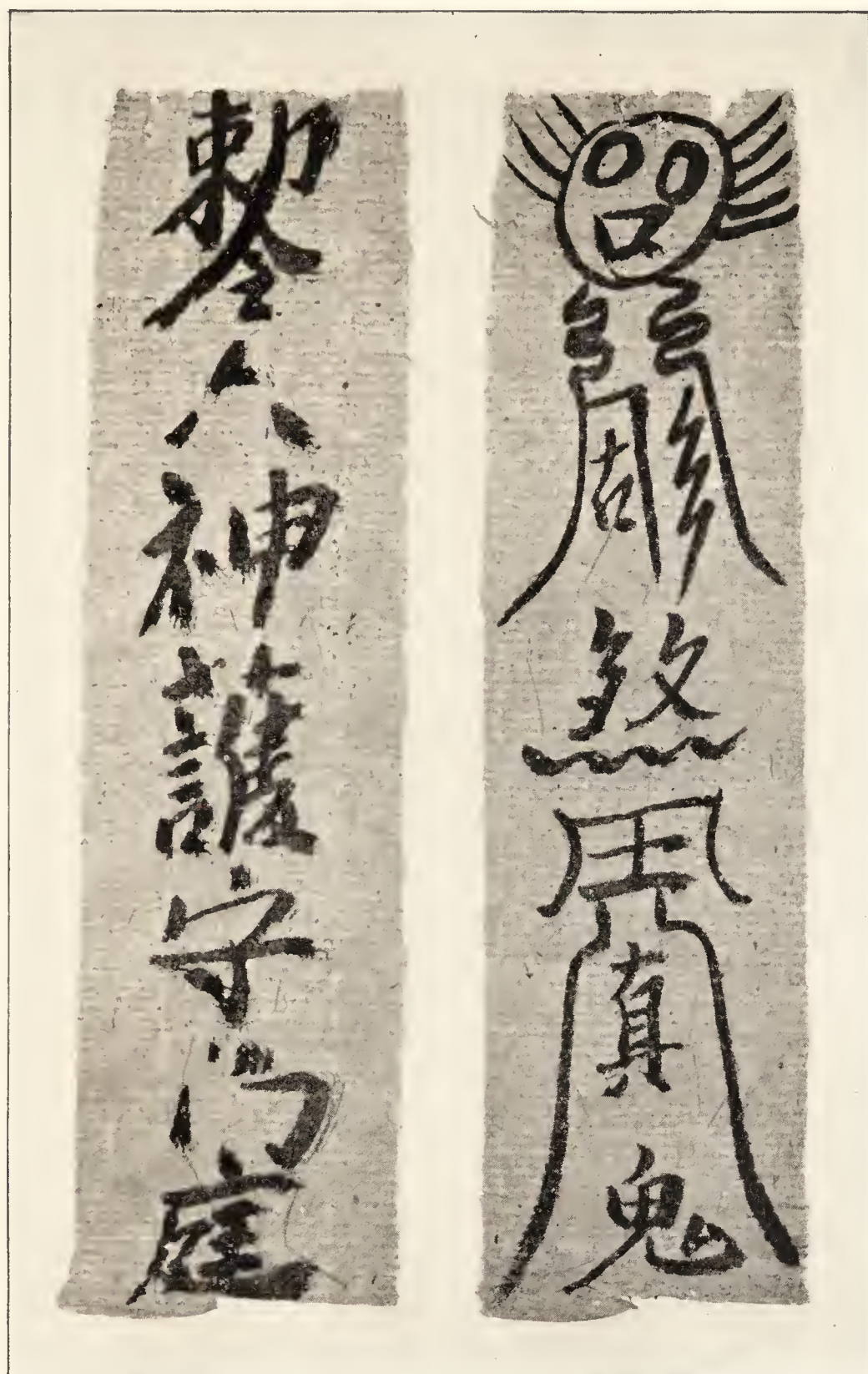
<sup>1</sup> See illustration.

<sup>2</sup> See illustration. The *T'ien Kou* is the Japanese *Tengu*. See *Trans. As. Soc. Jap.* Pt. ii (1908).

<sup>3</sup> For the magic uses of peach-wood see De Groot's *Religious System of China*, vol. iv. pp. 304 *seq.*

<sup>4</sup> "I see no race of men, however polished and educated, however brutal and barbarous, which does not believe that warnings of future events are given, and may be understood and announced by certain persons." Cicero's words, after the lapse of a couple of thousand years, are still true. (See *Cic. de Divinatione*, i. 1.)





PROTECTIVE CHARMS USED IN WEIHAIWEI.





them both in front of him, keeping his clenched hands close to his sides. He then moved slowly round, and when the sticks were pointing in the direction the thief had gone the points came together.<sup>1</sup> No doubt there is as much make-believe and quackery about these mysterious doings as there is in the similar practices of many so-called mediums in the West; but I am unwilling to believe that "there is nothing in it." Some day, let us hope, the "spiritualism" of China will be thoroughly studied by scientific investigators, and it will be surprising if the results do not form a most valuable addition to the material collected by the European and American societies for psychical research.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A very similar method of divining is practised in the Malay States. See Swettenham's *Malay Sketches*, pp. 201-7, and Skeat's *Malay Magic*, p. 542.

<sup>2</sup> The following remarks in Dennys's *Folk-lore of China* (pp. 56 seq.) will be of interest to those who are wise enough to regard this subject with unorthodox seriousness: "Divination is in China as popular as, and probably more respectable than, it was amongst the Israelites in the days of the witch of Endor, and it is not perhaps going too far to say that there is not a single means resorted to in the West by way of lifting the impenetrable veil which hides the future from curious mankind which is not known to and practised by the Chinese. From 'Pinking the Bible' to using the Planchette, from tossing for odd and even to invoking spirits to actually speak through crafty media, the whole range of Western superstition in this regard is as familiar to the average Chinaman as to the most enthusiastic spiritualist at home. The coincidences of practice and belief are indeed so startling that many will doubtless see in them a sort of evidence either for their truthfulness, or for a common origin of evil. . . . It is when we come to the consulting of media, the use of a forked stick, writing on sand, and similar matters that the Chinese practice becomes singular in its resemblance to superstitions openly avowed at home. I would here remark that I am no spiritualist. But how, without any apparent connection with each other, such beliefs should at once be found in full force in the farthest East and the extreme West is puzzling. Is our Western spiritualism derived from China?" It may be added that Japanese "occultism"—to use a disagreeable but useful word—is very similar to Chinese, and offers equally striking analogies with that of Europe. (See Percival Lowell's *Occult Japan*.)

Witches and mediums in Weihaiwei are often applied to for remedies in cases of bodily sickness, for it is supposed that what such persons do not know about herbs and drugs is not worth knowing; and the fact that they are able to throw a little magic into their brews naturally makes their concoctions much more valuable than those provided by ordinary doctors. Chinese medicines, as every one knows, often consist of highly disagreeable ingredients,<sup>1</sup> but some—even when compounded by witches and other uncanny healers—are comparatively harmless. Certain methods of treatment for the bite of a mad dog may perhaps be cited as typical products of the combined arts of medicine and witchcraft in Weihaiwei. The simplest method is to boil the mad dog's liver, heart and lungs, and make the patient eat them. Another is to make a number of little wheat-cakes, moulded into a dog's shape, and administer them to the patient one by one. As he consumes them he should sit at the front door of his house and repeatedly utter in a loud and determined voice the words, "I am not going to die; I am not going to die." This procedure is evidently a curious blend of something like sympathetic magic and cure by self-suggestion. Have the Chinese anticipated the methods of the well-meaning persons who call themselves Christian Scientists? A third way of providing against hydrophobia is to take some of the hairs of the mad dog and burn them to ashes; the ashes are then mixed in a cup of rice-wine and imbibed by the patient. The idea that the hair of a mad dog will cure the person who has had the misfortune to be bitten must be very widespread, for it existed in

<sup>1</sup> It is not so well known that almost equally disgusting medicines used to be prescribed in England. One writer says of some old Lincolnshire remedies for ague that they "were so horribly filthy that I am inclined to think most people must have preferred the ague, or the race could hardly have survived." One of these remedies consisted of nine worms taken from a churchyard sod and chopped up small. (See *County Folk-lore*, vol. v, p. 117.)



the British Isles and there is a reference to it in the Scandinavian Edda.<sup>1</sup>

Those who are familiar with the mazes of folk-lore will not be surprised to hear that the madness of a person who suffers from hydrophobia is supposed by many people in Weihaiwei to communicate itself to the very clothes he wears. "If the clothes are put aside in a heap," said one of my informants, "they will be seen to quiver and tremble, and sometimes they will leap about as if alive." Being a truthful man, he added, "I have never actually seen this happen myself." In the market-village of Fêng-lin there is a man of some local celebrity who is said to have effected many remarkable cures of hydrophobia by means of a recipe which he jealously guards as a family secret.

If his prescription cannot be given here, another (supposed to be equally efficacious) may take its place. Cut the tips off a couple of chopsticks (the Oriental substitute for knife and fork), pound them into a pulp and stew them for an hour; add an ounce of hempen-fibre, burnt almost to ashes, and some morsels of the herb known as *ch'ing-fêng-t'êng*. The chopsticks must be of wood, painted red, and they must be old ones that have been often used. The tips consist of the thin ends employed in picking up food. The whole mixture should be well mixed together and boiled in water, and administered to the patient as a liquid drug. The prescription adds that while undergoing this treatment the patient should beware of yielding himself to feelings of nervousness; that for three days he must shun cold or uncooked food; and that owing to the singular efficacy of this medicine, he need not avoid crossing rivers. The mention of the ends of chopsticks as an ingredient in this preparation seems curious, and specially noteworthy is the fact that the medicinal virtue resides

<sup>1</sup> Tylor, *Primitive Culture* (4th ed.), vol. i. p. 84. On this subject see also Dennys's *Folk-lore of China*, pp. 51-2.

only in old chopsticks, not in new ones. As this ingredient appears in other Chinese medicines besides those intended for the cure of hydrophobia, it may be conjectured that some health-giving quality is supposed to pass into the tips of chopsticks from the food which they manipulate, and that this quality can be transferred from the chopsticks to a living person by the simple process of conveying them in a minced form into his physical system. The red colour is merely intended to improve their efficacy, for red is the hue of health and good luck. The reference to crossing rivers is also worthy of notice. The theory of the Chinese in Weihaiwei is that the man who has been bitten by a rabid dog is liable to be seized by paroxysms of madness if he crosses flowing water. The word hydrophobia (dread of water) is thus as applicable to the popular conception of the disease in China as in Europe, though the belief that the human patient or the mad dog will refuse water as a beverage does not seem to be known in Weihaiwei.

The lives of the Weihaiwei villagers are brightened and diversified by a good number of festivals and holidays. Most of these are observed all over China, others are of local importance, while some of the customs and ceremonies now to be described are observed only in certain villages. The universal holiday-season in China consists of course of the first few days of the New Year, which falls about a month—more or less—later than the corresponding festival in the West. After the hour of *wu kêng* (3 a.m.) on the first day of the year, torches are lighted and certain religious or semi-religious observances take place, consisting of the worship of Heaven and Earth (*T'ien Ti*), the Hearth-god and the Ancestors of the family, and the ceremonial salutation of father and mother by their children, and of uncles and aunts and elder brothers by their respective nephews and younger brothers. Fire crackers are let off at intervals



during the morning and throughout the day, and from dawn onwards visits of ceremony are exchanged between relations and neighbours. The Ancestral Temple is also visited, and incense burned before the spirit-tablets and the pedigree-scrolls, which are unrolled only on solemn occasions. In conversation all reference to unhappy or unlucky subjects is tabooed, as likely to bring misfortune on the family in whose house such remarks are made.<sup>1</sup>

On going out of doors for the first time care should be taken to choose a "lucky" spot for the first footstep. If a person slip or fall when going out to pay ceremonial visits on New Year's Day, it is believed that he will bring disaster on his own family as well as on the families visited. For the first three days of the year the floors of the house are left unswept. The idea at the root of this custom apparently is that anything thrown or swept out of the house will take the "good luck" of the house with it; even dirty water and the refuse of food must remain indoors until the critical three days are past. New Year is the season of new clothes, and red is, of course, the colour chiefly displayed. Special care is taken to dress the children in the best and most brightly-coloured garments obtainable, as evil spirits hate the sight of such things, and will remain at a respectful distance. At the eaves of the roof are often hung hemp-stalks, which are said to bring perpetual advancement and long life.<sup>2</sup> The observation of the skies on New Year's Day is a matter of importance. If the wind blows from the south-east the next harvest will be a splendid one. If the clouds are tinged with red and yellow it will be moderately good; if they are dark and gloomy it will be very poor.

<sup>1</sup> "If the first person who enters a house on New Year's morning brings bad news, it is a sign of ill-luck for the whole of the year."—*County Folk-lore: Lincolnshire*, p. 168.

<sup>2</sup> The knots or joints of the hemp-stalk are supposed to represent successive stages of advancement.

"The Beginning of Spring" or *Li Ch'un* is a movable feast, falling usually in the first moon. The ceremonies observed have reference to agriculture, and though they are chiefly official in character they are considered of great importance to the farming public. Ages ago the essential part of the proceedings was the slaughter of an ox, which was offered as a sacrifice to the god of Agriculture—generally identified with the legendary Emperor Shên Nung (B.C. 2838). Nowadays the place of the ox is taken by a cheaper substitute. On the eve of *Li Ch'un* the local magistrate and his attendants go in procession to the eastern suburbs of the city for the purpose of ceremonially "meeting the Spring."<sup>1</sup> Theatrical performers, singing as they go, and musicians with cymbals and flutes, follow the sedan-chairs of the officials, and after them are carried the Spring Ox<sup>2</sup>—not a real animal, but a great effigy made of stiff paper—and a similar paper image of a man, known as *Mang-Shên*, who represents either the typical ox-driver or ploughman or the god of Agriculture.<sup>3</sup> When the procession has "met the Spring" outside the city walls it returns to the magisterial yamên, and there the magistrate and his principal colleagues, armed with wands decorated

<sup>1</sup> *Ying ch'un*. The ceremonies differ from place to place in minor details. Those here described are observed (with variations) at the district cities nearest to Weihaiwei—namely Wên-têng, Jung ch'êng and Ning-hai.

<sup>2</sup> *Ch'un Niu*.

<sup>3</sup> In Shanghai, and probably elsewhere, a real ox is still sometimes used, and he is led by a real child (*T'ai Sui*) instead of a cardboard *Mang-Shên*. See the Rev. A. Box's "Shanghai Folk-lore" in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (China Branch), vol. xxxiv. (1901-2) pp. 116-7, and vol. xxxvi. (1905) pp. 136-7. Needless to say, no blood is shed nowadays, though it seems not unlikely that at one time a living child and a living ox were both offered up in sacrifice to promote the fertility of the crops. In Northumberland, England, it is or used to be a custom to hold rustic masquerades at the New Year, the players being clothed in the *hides of oxen* (see *County Folk-lore*, vol. iv.). It would be interesting to know whether the Northumbrian custom was originally a ceremony to promote fertility.



with strips of coloured paper, go through the form of prodding and beating the ox by way of "making him work" and giving an official impetus to agricultural labour. When this ceremony is over the paper ox is solemnly "sacrificed"—that is, he is committed to the flames; and a similar fate befalls the *Mang-Shên*. Besides the paper ox, a miniature ox made of clay is also supposed to be provided. The clay ox, so far as I can ascertain, dates from a remote period when it was considered necessary that the ox-effigy which was carried in procession and sacrificed should for symbolical reasons be made of earth or clay. When paper was substituted, conservatism demanded that oxen of clay should continue to be made as before—for show if not for use.<sup>1</sup>

While the images of the ox and *Mang-Shên* are being prepared for the approaching festival, a careful examination under official direction is made of the newly-issued New Year's Almanac—the Chinese *Zad-kiel*; and the effigies are dressed up and decorated in accordance with the prophecies and warnings of that publication. Hence the crowds of people who go out to watch the procession on its way to meet the Spring do so not only as a holiday diversion but also for the purpose of inspecting the colours and trappings of the effigies and thereby informing themselves of agricultural prospects for the ensuing year. The prognostications are founded partly on astrology, partly on the *pa kua* or mystic diagrams of the *I Ching* (Book of Changes), and partly on calculations connected with *fêng-shui*. The colours and apparel of the effigies correspond on an arbitrary system with the forecasts of the Almanac. Thus if the people see that the head of the ox is painted yellow, they know that great heat is foretold for the coming summer; if it is green, there will be much sickness in the spring; if red, there will be a drought; if black, there will be

<sup>1</sup> Probably the Spring Ox is still, in some parts of China, made of clay only, not of paper.

much rain; if white, there will be high winds and storms. The *Mang-Shên*, also, is a silent prophet of the seasons. If he wears a hat the year will be dry; if he wears no hat there will be rain; shoes, similarly, indicate very heavy rain; absence of shoes, drought; abundance of body-clothing, great heat; lightness of clothing, cold weather. Finally, a red belt on the *Mang-Shên* indicates much sickness and many deaths; a white one, general good health.

It will be noticed that the *Mang-Shên*, being a spirit, behaves in a precisely contrary manner to ordinary mankind, and his garments indicate exactly the opposite of what they would indicate if they were worn by a living man. Thus he wears heavy clothes in hot weather, light ones in cold weather; and as red is among men the colour that denotes joy and prosperity and white betokens grief and mourning, so the *Mang-Shên* wears red to indicate death and white to indicate life and health. Thus it is that naughty children who take delight in doing the opposite of what they are told to do are sometimes by their long-suffering parents called "little *Mang-Shên*" or "T'ai Sui."

The Lantern Festival<sup>1</sup> is assigned to the fifteenth day of the first month. As the Chinese year is strictly determined by lunations, this means of course that the festival occurs at the time of the first full moon of the year. Coloured-paper lanterns are hung at the doors of houses and shops and are also carried in procession. Above the doors of the houses are often hung fir-branches, betokening prosperity and especially longevity.<sup>2</sup> The family eat little round cakes of glutinous rice which, being supposed to represent the

<sup>1</sup> *Shang Yüan Chieh*, Feast of the First Full Moon.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. pp. 262 *seq.* From Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* (vol. i. p. 344) we know that long after the establishment of Christianity there was kept up, in Europe, a pagan festival at which it was customary to decorate the doors of houses with branches of laurel and to hang out lanterns. The doors of Roman houses were regarded as being under the special protection of the household gods.





FIRST-FULL-MOON STILT-WALKERS (see p. 183).



" WALKING BOATS " AT THE FIRST-FULL-MOON FESTIVAL (see p. 184).







full moon,<sup>1</sup> may be called moon-cakes. There is no doubt that in remote times the fifteenth of the first and the fifteenth of the eighth months were devoted to moon-worship. A curious custom observed at the Lantern Festival is called the *tsou pai ping*—"the expulsion of disease." In some localities this merely consists in a procession of villagers across the neighbouring bridges, the procession returning home by a route other than that by which they set out. The popular notion obviously is that sickness is caused by invisible beings of a malignant nature who on the occasion of this festival can be driven across the local streams and so expelled from the village.<sup>2</sup> In other localities the expulsion of disease is on this occasion performed only by women, who do not necessarily cross bridges but simply walk out into the fields and back by a different route. Male villagers perform a similar ceremony on the ninth of the ninth month.

So far as Weihaiwei is concerned the Feast of Lanterns may be regarded as pre-eminently the holiday season for children. During several days before and after the fifteenth of the first month bands of young village boys dress up in strange garments and go about by day and night acting queer little plays, partly in dumb-show and partly in speech, dance and song. Some of them wear the terrifying masks of wild beasts, such as lions, a few assume the white beards of old men, and many are attired in girls' clothing. The children perform their parts with great vivacity,

<sup>1</sup> *Yüan hsiao*.

<sup>2</sup> For some interesting notes on the bridge-walking customs, see Rev. E. Box's "Shanghai Folk-lore," in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (China Branch), vol. xxxvi. (1905) pp. 133-4. These practices are not confined to China. In Korea, on the fourteenth and fifteenth of the first month the men and boys of Seoul walk over three particular bridges in succession, in order to safeguard themselves from pains in the legs and feet throughout the ensuing year. (See article by T. Watters in *Folk-lore*, March 1895.) For the beliefs of many races on the subject of the expulsion of evils in general, see Frazer's *Golden Bough* (2nd ed.), vol. iii. pp. 39 *seq.*, 70 *seq.*

and go through their masquerades, dances and chorus-singing in a manner that would do credit to the juvenile performers at a provincial English pantomime. They are, indeed, taught their parts and trained by their elders for some weeks before the festival. Every group of villages keeps a stock of masks, false beards, clothes and other "properties," and there are always adults who take pleasure in teaching the little ones the songs and dances which they themselves learned as children in bygone days. In daytime the dressed-up children take a prominent part in processions to the local temples. On such occasions many of them are perched on high stilts, which they manage with great skill. At night they carry large lighted Chinese lanterns and march amid music and song through the streets of their native village, or from one village to another, stopping occasionally in front of a prominent villager's house to act their little play or perform a lantern-dance.<sup>1</sup>

No European who has seen a lantern-dance in a Shantung village can fail to be delighted. The graceful movements of the children, their young voices ringing clear in the frosty air, the astonishing dexterity with which they manipulate the swinging lanterns, the weird effect of rapidly-interchanging light and shadow as the gleaming paper moons thread the bewildering mazes of a complicated country-dance,—all these things combine to please the eye and charm the ear. Not the least interesting part of the proceedings is the obvious pleasure taken by the crowds of adult spectators in the performances of their little ones: for the Chinese are devoted to children.

The next notable festival of the year is a movable feast known as the "Awakening of the Torpid Insects," generally held early in the second month. In

<sup>1</sup> This may be compared with the Scottish customs in connection with the guisers or guisards. In Shetland a torchlight procession sometimes formed part of the revelry. (See *Folk-lore*, vol. iii. [Orkney and Shetland], pp. 203 *seq.*)





MASQUERADERS AT FESTIVAL OF FIRST FULL MOON.



GROUP OF VILLAGERS WATCHING FIRST-FULL-MOON MASQUERADERS.





many villages it is customary to rise before dawn and cook a kind of dumpling, which as it "rises" is supposed to assist Nature in her work of awakening the sluggish or dormant vitality of animals and of vegetation. The presiding deity of this festival is, naturally enough, the Sun, and it is to him that the dumplings are offered. Similar offerings are made by the Emperor himself in his capacity of High Priest. It is believed that if on the evening of this day children wash their faces in a kind of soup made from a certain shrub (*Lycium chinense*)<sup>1</sup> they will never be ill and never grow old. This reminds us of the old English belief that young people will preserve their youthful beauty indefinitely by going into the fields before breakfast on the first of May and washing their faces in May dew.<sup>2</sup>

On the eighth of the second month it is thought that by observing the direction of the wind it is possible to foretell whether the ensuing weather will be favourable or otherwise to the crops. If the wind comes from the south-east there will be a good rainfall; if it comes from the north-west there will be a drought.

The fifteenth of the second month is known as *Hua Chao*, "the morning of flowers,"—for it is supposed to be the flowers' birthday.<sup>3</sup>

The festival of Cold Food (*Han Shih*)—so called because it was once customary to partake of no hot provisions on this day and to light no fire—occurs on the eve of the Ch'ing-Ming festival. The Chinese in Weihaiwei have no clear idea why cold food was

<sup>1</sup> For remarks on the supposed remarkable properties of this shrub, see De Groot's *Religious System of China*, vol. iv. p. 320.

<sup>2</sup> See *County Folk-lore*, vol. iv. (Northumberland) p. 73.

<sup>3</sup> In different parts of the Empire the date is variously assigned to the second, tenth, twelfth and fifteenth of the month. For Shanghai customs in connection with this festival, see Rev. A. Box, *Journal of the R.A.S. (China)*, vol. xxxiv. p. 117 and vol. xxxvi. pp. 137-8. In that part of China "the women and children adorn the flowering shrubs with paper rosettes, and recite verses and prostrate themselves in token of respect and in hope of a fruitful season."

compulsory on this occasion, but the custom is undoubtedly connected with the ancient rite, once prevalent in many parts of the world, of kindling "new fire" once a year. The Chinese *Han Shih* would thus represent an intervening day between the extinction of the old fire and the lighting of the new. The custom seems to be connected with sun-worship. "The solar rite of the New Fire," says Dr. Tylor, "adopted by the Roman Church as a paschal ceremony, may still be witnessed in Europe, with its solemn curfew on Easter Eve and the ceremonial striking of the new holy fire."<sup>1</sup> Another writer observes that "formerly throughout England the house-fires were allowed to go out on Easter Sunday, after which the chimney and fireplace were completely cleaned and the fire once more lighted."<sup>2</sup> It is curious to note that similar observances took place even on the American continent. "In Peru, as in Mexico," says a writer on the religious systems of ancient America,<sup>3</sup> "there was a solemn religious ceremony of renewing at stated periods, by special generation, the fire used in the temples and even in the households. . . . It is one of the oldest rites of the human race, and it has survived under all religions alike down to the other day, when perhaps it received its death-blow from the lucifer match."

The Ch'ing-Ming or "Pure and Bright" festival is as carefully observed at Weihaiwei as elsewhere throughout China. It is a movable feast generally occurring early in the third Chinese month.<sup>4</sup> Edible delicacies of various kinds are diligently prepared in every household and taken to the family graveyard

<sup>1</sup> Tylor's *Primitive Culture* (4th ed.), vol. ii. pp. 277-8, 290 *seq.*, 297 *seq.*, and p. 432. See also Frazer's *Golden Bough* (2nd ed.), vol. iii. p. 251.

<sup>2</sup> Gomme's *Folk-lore Relics of Early Village Life*, p. 97.

<sup>3</sup> J. M. Robertson in *Religious Systems of the World* (8th ed.), p. 369.

<sup>4</sup> In 1910 it falls on April 6, which is the 27th of the second Chinese month.



to be sacrificially offered to the ancestral spirits. At this season, and at the corresponding festival held on the first day of the tenth month, all the members of the family who can attend prostrate themselves on the ground in front of their ancestors' graves.<sup>1</sup> These observances are known as *shang fên*—"going up to the tombs."<sup>2</sup> This is one of the occasions on which family reunions take place. It is a holiday season and there is plenty of jollity and feasting; but the sacrifices and the "sweeping of tombs" are regarded as sacred duties, the omission of which through negligence would show a discreditable lack of filial piety and might entail misfortune on the present and future generations of the family. The virtues of obedience and submission to authority are also emphasised at this season in the village schools, where the pupils formally salute their teachers. An old custom sometimes observed at this time is the wearing of willow-leaves on the head. This is supposed to produce good weather for agriculture. This practice is not so common in Weihaiwei as in Shansi and some parts of Chihli and Honan, where in seasons of drought—only too common in those parts—men and boys go about for many days wearing on their heads wreaths made of fresh willow-branches. The willow is a tree that loves water and the banks of rivers, and willow-wreaths are therefore regarded as rain-charms.<sup>3</sup>

In the third month comes the festival of Corn-rain (*Ku Yü*). This is the appropriate time for obtaining written charms as antidotes against snakes and grubs and venomous or destructive reptiles and insects in general.

The so-called Dragon Festival<sup>4</sup> is held on the fifth day of the fifth month. This is the occasion on which

<sup>1</sup> See illustration.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 257.

<sup>3</sup> Instances of similar rain-charms may be found in Frazer's *Golden Bough* (2nd ed.), vol. i. pp. 188-9.

<sup>4</sup> *Tuan Wu* or *Tuan Yang*.

the well-known dragon-boat races take place at Canton and elsewhere in south China. According to tradition, the festival was inaugurated in memory of a high-minded statesman and poet named Ch'ü Yüan of the Ch'u State (south of the Yangtse) who was driven to commit suicide in the fourth century B.C. It is with the simulated object of recovering his body that the dragon-boats—so named from their length and peculiar shape—annually dash through the waters of the southern rivers. But there are no boat-races of this kind at Weihaiwei. Little cakes called *tsung-tzû*—made of rice or millet with a morsel of fruit or sweetmeat inside—are eaten by the people; but there seems to be no local knowledge of the fact that these cakes were originally intended as sacrifices to Ch'ü Yüan and ought to be thrown into flowing water as offerings to his spirit.

The fifth month is regarded as the most "poisonous" of all the months in the year, and antidotes and charms of all kinds are necessary to repel the deadly influences that assail suffering humanity at this period. Children are protected from the many dangers that surround them by tying bands of parti-coloured silk threads round their fore-arms. Among the most efficacious family-charms is the mugwort plant (*Artemisia moxa*), which is hung over every doorway. Prof. Giles cites an old saying to the effect that "if on the *Tuan Wu* festival one does not hang up mugwort, one will not eat any new wheat"; and explains it by the comment that a famous rebel named Huang Ch'ao gave orders to his soldiers to spare any family that exhibited this plant at its door. But the superstitious use of mugwort is far more ancient than any such story would imply. Its extreme antiquity is shown by the fact that this plant has been similarly used as a valued charm against evil in other parts of the world, including France, Germany and Britain.<sup>1</sup> The custom

<sup>1</sup> See Frazer's *Golden Bough* (2nd ed.), vol. iii. pp. 268, 270, 274 and especially pp. 337-8. See also *Folk-lore Journal*, vol. iii. p. 148.



in such lands was to pluck the plant at the summer solstice (Midsummer Day) and to wear it on the person or (as in China) to hang it over the doorway. This is only one of innumerable examples of the strange unity that seems to underlie old popular customs and superstitions all the world over.

In spite of the terrible potency of the evil things rampant during the fifth month, it is supposed in Weihaiwei that from sunrise to sunset on the fifth of the month (the festival we are now considering) all poisonous and destructive influences—material and spiritual—totally disappear, perhaps owing to the efficacy of the charms universally used against them on that day. It is believed that even poisonous plants are absolutely innocuous if plucked and eaten on the fifth of the fifth moon, while medicinal herbs attain their supreme degree of efficacy.

A well-known custom is to rise early and walk exactly one hundred paces into a grass-field without turning the head; then to pluck one hundred blades of grass, which must be carefully taken home. The grass is put into a pot of water and thoroughly boiled. The water—into which all the virtues of the grass are now supposed to have passed—is poured through a strainer into a second vessel, and the grass-blades are thrown away. A second boiling now takes place, and the liquid is poured into a bottle and kept for use as required. It is believed to be a sovereign remedy for headaches, small wounds and bruises, and various nervous disorders. The Chinese know it as *pai ts'ao kao*—"hundred-grass lotion." The wise men who hand down this valuable recipe from generation to generation are careful to explain that the medicine will be of no avail whatever if any of the prescribed conditions have been neglected. It is absolutely necessary to walk neither more nor less than one hundred paces, to pluck neither more nor less than one hundred blades of grass, and to boil and strain the water in the manner laid down. Above all, every-

thing must be done on the fifth day of the fifth month, as it is only on that day that ordinary grass possesses *ling*—spiritual or health-giving properties.

The seventh day of the seventh month is celebrated throughout China in connection with a love-story to which allusion is constantly made in Chinese literature. It is said that the Herd-boy (the star  $\beta\gamma$  Aquila) and the Spinning Maiden ( $\alpha$  Lyra), separated throughout the rest of the year by the Milky Way, are allowed to cross a mystic bridge made by magpies, and to meet and embrace each other on that night only. In Weihaiwei, where there are large numbers of magpies, it is said that not one of these birds will ever be seen on this day until after the hour of noon: all having gone up to the skies to perform the duty of making a bridge for the celestial lovers. The day is regarded as one of good omen and suitable for fortune-telling and the drawing of lots.

On the preceding evening (the sixth of the month) boys and girls put bowls of water on the window-sill and leave them standing all night. In the morning each child picks a bristle from an ordinary broom<sup>1</sup> and places it carefully on the surface of the water. The shadow made in the water by the bristle is supposed to indicate the child's future lot in life. If, for instance, the shadow seems to take the shape of a Chinese brush-pen, the boy will become a great scholar; if it is shaped like a plough he will remain in the condition of a peasant or farmer. I have been told of a child who saw in the water the form of a fish. This was interpreted to be a *mu yü* or the "wooden fish" of Buddhist temples—a queer hollow instrument of wood that lies on every Buddhist altar in China and is tapped by the monks while reciting their prayers. The wise men of the neighbourhood foretold, there-

<sup>1</sup> There is supposed to be some magic efficacy attached to brooms, and evil spirits are believed to have a special dread of them. In Europe, as every one knows, a witch must have her broomstick just as she must have her black cat.



fore, that the boy was destined to become a monk. The prophecy was a true one, for subsequently of his own accord he entered "the homeless state."

Another children's amusement on this occasion is to catch a spider and put it under an inverted bowl. If, when the bowl is turned up, the spider is found to have spun a web, the child and his parents are overjoyed: for it is supposed that good fortune will adhere to him throughout the ensuing year just as a captured fly adheres to a spider's web.

On the fifteenth of the seventh month sacrifices are again offered to the dead. This is a "Festival of Souls."<sup>1</sup>

On the first of the eighth month it is customary to collect some dew and use it for moistening a little ink.<sup>2</sup> This ink is devoted to the purpose of making little dots or marks on children's foreheads, and this, it is supposed, will preserve them from sickness.

On the mid-autumn festival<sup>3</sup> of the fifteenth of the eighth month reverence is paid to the ruler of the night. Offerings of cake, wine and fruit are made to the full moon and then consumed by the worshippers.<sup>4</sup> The occasion is one of family gatherings and festal mirth.

On the Ch'ung Yang festival of the ninth day of the ninth month it used to be the custom in many parts of China to eat specially-prepared flour-cakes called *kao*<sup>5</sup> and to drink wine made of the chry-

<sup>1</sup> *Kuei Chieh*.

<sup>2</sup> The so-called Indian ink ordinarily used by Chinese.

<sup>3</sup> The ordinary Chinese name is *Chung Yüan*, a reference being understood to the *Shang Yüan*, or the fifteenth of the first month, and the *Hsia Yüan* or the fifteenth of the tenth.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. the offerings to Ashtoreth the Moon-goddess of the Hittites. For mention of similar offerings in England itself, see Dennys's *Folklore of China*, p. 28.

<sup>5</sup> There is a play on this Chinese word, which has the same sound as a different character meaning *to go up* or *to receive promotion*. He who eats the cake is supposed to be securing his own advancement in life. There is a similar double-meaning in the phrase *têng kao*.

santhemum. The cakes are still made and eaten in Weihaiwei, but the chrysanthemum wine appears to be obsolete.<sup>1</sup> On this day it is customary for young men (especially those of the lettered classes) to climb to the top (*têng kao*) of one of the hills of their neighbourhood. The advantages are two in number: it will lead to the promotion of those who are engaged in climbing the steep slopes of an official career, and it will free them for the ensuing year from all danger of sickness. This is equivalent to the *tsou pai ping* of the women on the fifteenth of the first month.

On the first day of the tenth month the family tombs are visited, and the same ceremonies observed as at the Ch'ing-Ming festival. This is one of the three days in the year that are regarded as specially sacred to the souls of the departed (*Kuei Chieh* or Festivals of Souls or Spirits): the Ch'ing-Ming (movable) in or about the third month, and the fixed festivals of the fifteenth of the seventh and the first of the tenth months. Similarly there are three festivals specially provided for the living (*Jên Chieh* or Festivals of Men), and these are marked by feasting and merriment; they are the New Year festival, the fifth of the fifth and the fifteenth of the eighth months. The former list does not, however, exhaust the occasions on which reverence is paid to ancestors. At the winter solstice,<sup>2</sup> for instance, ancestral sacrifices are offered in the family temples; and at the New Year, as we have seen, the living do not forget, in the midst of their own pleasures, the sacred duties owed to the souls of the dead.

On the eighth of the twelfth month it is customary for matrons to regale their families with a concoction made of grain, vegetables and water called La-pa-chou, which means "gruel for the eighth of the sacrificial month." Children are made to partake of an un-

<sup>1</sup> For remarks on the ancient custom of drinking this wine, see De Groot, *Religious System of China*, vol. iv. p. 322.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 277.



savoury cake made of buckwheat, hare's blood, sulphur, cinnabar and tea-leaves. This, it is believed, will protect young people from smallpox—a somewhat prevalent disease among the native children of Weihaiwei.

In the evening of the twenty-third of the twelfth month an important family ceremony takes place known as *ts'ü tsao* or *sung tsao*—"Taking farewell of the Hearth-god." The hearth-god or kitchen-god (*tsao shên*) is a Taoist divinity who is supposed to dwell near the kitchen fireplace of every family,<sup>1</sup> and whose business it is to watch the doings of every member of the family from day to day with a view to reporting them in detail at the close of the year to the Taoist Supreme Deity. In order to make his annual report he is supposed to leave the kitchen on the twenty-third of the last month of the year, and ascend to heaven. Before he goes, obeisance is made to him by the family, and he is presented with small round sugared cakes called *t'ang kua* and lumps of *no mi*, a glutinous rice. The object of providing the god with these dainties is to make his lips stick together so that he will be unable to open his mouth and make his report. The family is thus saved from any inconvenient results arising from an enumeration of its misdeeds. Needless to say, the matter is not regarded very seriously in most households, and the ceremonies are chiefly kept up as a source of amusement for children, who receive their full share of the sticky cakes. After a sojourn of a week in heaven the hearth-god returns to his own fireside on New Year's Eve.

On the twenty-fourth of the month every house is thoroughly swept out in preparation for the New

<sup>1</sup> There is some reason to believe that the Hearth-god was once regarded as an anonymous ancestor of the family, though nowadays this relationship is ignored. The Chinese *Tsao shên* may be compared with the Japanese Kojin. For some valuable notes on Hearth-worship in general, see Gomme's *Folk-lore Relics of Early Village Life*, pp. 87 *seq.* The cult of a hearth-god has been known in western Europe and also in New Zealand.

Year's festivities. The object of this ceremony is not merely the practical and necessary one of cleanliness: the sweeping process will, it is believed, rid the house of all malign influences that may have collected there during the past year, and thereby render it fit for the reception of every kind of joy and good luck. This is an auspicious day for the celebration of marriages.

New Year's Eve (*Ch'u hsi*) marks the beginning of the Chinese holiday season, and is a day of mirth and feasting. In many families it is the custom to sit up all night; the phrase *shou sui* has practically the same signification as our "seeing the Old Year out and the New Year in." In the evening, new red scrolls, such as adorn the outside and inside of nearly every Chinese house, are pasted over the old ones that have now become faded or illegible. The brilliant colour of these scrolls and the felicitous phrases, virtuous maxims and wise literary allusions with which they abound are regarded by the common people (who can rarely read them) as equivalent to powerful charms that will bring happiness and good fortune to all who dwell beneath the shadow of their influence. Fire-crackers, the delight of old and young in China, are let off at every door-step, helping at each explosion to dissipate any traces of bad luck that may be lingering in the neighbourhood and to frighten away the last malignant spirit who might otherwise mar the happiness of the New Year.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE WOMEN OF WEIHAIWEI

THE reader who has already learned from an earlier chapter of this book how frequently women figure in the law-courts, will perhaps be prepared for a not too flattering description of Chinese womankind as represented in the leased Territory. If the litigious and quarrelsome females were typical specimens of their sex it would indeed be difficult to utter a word of truthful praise for the women of Weihaiwei. But it is only fair to remember that it is just the turbulent and masterful females that chiefly come within a British magistrate's range of experience. Chaste and filial daughters, gentle and companionable wives, brave and devoted mothers, bring happiness to multitudes of cottage homes and are to be found in every village; but they seldom come under the official notice of the authorities.

Women in Weihaiwei are, indeed, ignorant of nearly everything that is generally implied by education; they are handicapped from childhood by the thoroughly bad old custom of foot-binding; they know nothing of the world beyond the limits of their own group of villages: yet the lives they lead are probably, as a rule, happy, honourable and useful. The Chinese suppose that a woman's proper sphere is the management of the household affairs and the upbringing of her children: and Chinese

women seem as a rule to acquiesce willingly and cheerfully in their lot as thus defined.

The woman's position as wife and mother is a highly honourable one: filial piety—the cardinal Chinese virtue—is owed to the mother as much as to the father, and the usual sacrificial rites are conducted in honour of the maternal as well as the paternal ancestors of the family. From prehistoric times the dignity of the mother has been regarded in China as hardly inferior to that of the father,<sup>1</sup> subject of course to the father's headship of the family. It would be a great mistake to suppose that Chinese women are brutally or tyrannically treated by their husbands. That cases of ill-treatment of women are sometimes met with is undoubted, but as a rule the tyrant is not the husband but some female member of the husband's family. Mothers-in-law are the domestic tyrants of rural China. Besides treating the wife with severity they often place the husband in a most unhappy dilemma.

If he wishes, as he often does, to protect his wife from the elder lady's violence or bad temper he runs the risk of being denounced to the neighbours—and perhaps to the local magistrate—as an unfilial son; if he weakly and reluctantly takes his mother's side in a domestic disagreement, or if—as is much more frequently the case—he pretends to shut his eyes altogether to the quarrels of his women-folk, the wife of his bosom may in a moment of anger or despair run away from him or commit suicide. The only source of comfort to a young wife who is unfortunate enough to displease her husband's mother is that some day, in the course of nature, she herself will be in the proud position of a mother-in-law. If she is of a cantankerous or tyrannical disposition, or if her temper has been soured by her own domestic troubles, she will then doubtless treat her son's wife with just as little kindness as she received in her own early days of

<sup>1</sup> Just the same was the theory of the old Sumerian law.



wifeness, and her daughter-in-law will fear and dislike her just as she herself feared and disliked her own husband's mother. Fortunately there are good and benevolent mothers-in-law in Weihaiwei as well as bad ones: and it is only fair to add that it is not always the wife who is meek and submissive and the mother-in-law who wields the iron rod. Sometimes a high-spirited and obstinate young woman will become absolute ruler of the household—including her husband and his parents—before she has lived a month in her new home, though her tenure of authority will always be somewhat precarious until she has given birth to her first son. "Why do you run away from a woman?" I once asked an unhappy husband whose domestic troubles had driven him to the courts. "Is she not your wife, and can you not make her obey you?" The young man's features broadened into a somewhat mirthless smile as he replied, "I am afraid of her. Eight men out of ten are afraid of their wives."

Women, indeed, are at the root of a large proportion of the cases heard in the courts. No insignificant part of the duty of a magistrate in Weihaiwei consists in the taming of village shrews. The number of such women in China is much larger than might be supposed by many Europeans, who regard the average Chinese wife as the patient slave of a tyrannical master. The fact is that Chinese women, in spite of their compressed feet and mincing gait, rule their households quite as effectually as women do in countries further west, and in the lower classes they frequently extend the sphere of their masterful activity to their neighbours' houses as well. The result is not always conducive to harmony. "Forther-as the womman hath the maistrie," wrote one of the keenest students of human nature many centuries ago, "she maketh to muche desray; ther neden none ensamples of this. The experience of day by day oghte suffyse." This is a statement that multi-

tudes of woebegone husbands in Weihaiwei, were they readers of Chaucer, would readily endorse.

The abject terror with which an uncompromising village shrew is regarded by her male relatives and neighbours frequently creates situations which would be somewhat ludicrous if they did not contain an element of pathos. It is only when his women-folk make life insupportable that an afflicted villager takes the step of appealing for magisterial intervention: but the fact that such cases frequently occur seems to indicate that domestic infelicities of a minor order must be very common. "Two months ago," wrote a petitioner, "I bought a piece of land in a neighbouring village, with the intention of building a house on it. Unfortunately, after the purchase was completed I made the discovery that my immediate neighbour was the most riotous female in the whole village. This was a very annoying circumstance to me. However I proceeded to build my house in a lawful and unostentatious manner and hoped I should have no trouble. All went well until one day when the female issued from her house and proceeded to pull my new walls to pieces on the plea that they interfered with the good luck (*fêng-shui*) of her own habitation. I stood by and requested her in the kindest manner to leave me and my house alone. She repaid me with the most violent abuse. How could I venture to hurl myself against the spears of the enemy? She is the terror of the whole village and her husband dares not interfere with her. I am sorry I ever bought the land, and I had no idea she was to be my neighbour or I should not have done so. I bought a charm to protect me against violent females, and stuck it up on the doorway of my new house, but it does not seem to have worked very well, and it has not frightened her at all. Meanwhile my house is standing in ruins, and I have no remedy unless the Magistrate, who loves the people as if they were his children, will come to the rescue."



This case was settled easily enough. Another bristled with difficulties owing to the fact that the plaintiff, in his petition, avoided any mention whatsoever of his real ground of complaint. "I have fifty *mu* of land [about eight acres]. I have two sons, the elder Ta-chü, the younger Erh-chü. In the second moon of this year they set up separate establishments<sup>1</sup> and entered upon possession of the ancestral lands. I was at that time in mourning for my wife, and beyond my *yang-lao-ti*<sup>2</sup> had no means of support for my old age. After they had left me, what with the expenses of my wife's funeral and my own personal requirements I found myself in debt to the extent of sixty *tiao* [approximately equivalent to six pounds sterling]. My two sons would not pay my debts: on the contrary they drove me out of my own house and refused to give me food. I am hungry and in hardship. My elder son, Ta-chü, at last relented and wanted to do something for me, but he was knocked down by Erh-chü and is confined to bed. I have reasoned with Erh-chü about his evil courses, but every time I do so he only beats me. The whole village is disgusted with his treatment of me but dares not interfere. Now I get wet through when it rains and I have to beg for a living. There is no rest for me. My lot has fallen in hard places. This son of mine is no better than a *hsiao ching*.<sup>3</sup> Is this the way to preserve the sacred human relationships?"

In this circumstantial petition no word of complaint is made against the real offender—the petitioner's second son's wife, who, as I soon ascertained, was a shrew of the worst order. To bring the action nominally against his second son was a clever device on the part of the petitioner, for no Chinese magistrate dare—except in almost unheard-of circumstances—take the word of a son against his own father, and an unfilial son is one of the worst of criminals. The

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 149 *seq.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> A bird that pecks at its parent's eyes as soon as it is fledged and so is an example of unfilial conduct.

old man presumed, therefore, that the case would be at once decided in his favour, and that his son would be imprisoned. His son's wife, the shrew, would then have been compelled to make reparation for her former misconduct and undertake to become a reformed character. When she had done this the old man would return to the magistrate and obtain her husband's release. As it happened, the process was not so circuitous as this, for the woman's misdeeds were discovered by the independent action of the court, and it was she, not her husband, who was sent to gaol. She was released as soon as her own father's family had come forward and entered—very reluctantly—into a bond to guarantee her future good conduct.

It must be remembered that as soon as a woman has left her father's roof and passes under the care of her husband—or rather of her husband's parents, if they are still alive—her father's family have no longer any legal control over her. Her husband's father and brothers become to all intents and purposes her own father and brothers: and to her father-in-law she owes the complete obedience that before marriage she owed to her father. She has in fact changed her family. Yet if she prove "unfilial"—that is, disobedient to her husband's family—a magistrate may call upon her father's family to go security for her future good conduct, on the ground that her unfilial behaviour must be due to her bad bringing-up, for which her father's family is responsible.

An English historian once pointed out that when two men sit on the same horse both of them cannot ride in front at the same time. The reference was to politics, the intimation being that there cannot be two co-ordinate controlling powers in the active government of the State: but the remark applies equally well to family life. If Crown and Parliament (or two separate Houses of Parliament) cannot have co-equal powers in the body-politic, neither can a man and



a woman have co-equal powers in the body-domestic: as there must be a supreme authority in the State, so there must be a supreme authority in the Family. Such used to be the theory of Englishmen, and such is still the theory of the Chinese. They have a proverb which recalls Gardiner's criticism of Clarendon's constitutional ideal. The Chinese say: "One horse cannot carry two saddles; the loyal servant cannot serve two masters."<sup>1</sup> But though in China the husband is legally possessed of very extensive powers over his wife and has every right to administer corporal punishment if she disobeys him or fails to treat his parents with proper respect, it is very rarely indeed that one hears of such powers being exercised in Weihaiwei.<sup>2</sup> No Chinese husband within my experience at Weihaiwei has ever been convicted of wife-beating: whereas the physical castigation of husbands by wives is by no means unheard of.

The northern Chinese use a curious and highly appropriate expression to describe a woman of the shrew type. They call her a *ma-chieh-ti* or "Curse-the-street woman." This is the kind of female who by blows or threats drives her husband out of the house, follows him into the road, and there—if he has sought safety in flight—proceeds to pour torrents of abuse at the top of her voice upon her male and female neighbours and all and sundry passers-by. If the village street happens to be entirely empty she will address her remarks to the papered windows, on the chance of there being listeners behind them. As a rule the neighbours will come out to "see the fun." The abused persons generally refrain from repartee, and the men—taking care to keep out of reach of

<sup>1</sup> *I ma pu pei shuang an; Chung ch'ên pu shih erh chu.*

<sup>2</sup> In some other parts of the Empire things are apparently very different. The Rev. J. Macgowan writes very strongly on the subject in his *Sidelights on Chinese Life*, pp. 32 seq. But I cannot believe that "sixty per cent. of the husbands throughout the Empire" practise wife-beating "habitually" (p. 35).

the nails of the *ma-chieh-ti*—gaze at her pensively and with impassive features until her spent voice fades into a hoarse whisper or physical exhaustion lays her helpless on the ground. But some quarrelsome female neighbour—herself no mean mistress of words—will often delight in advancing to a contest which is almost sure to end in bleeding faces and torn clothes. Then husbands and grandfathers are reluctantly compelled to intervene, and “peace-talkers” will help to coax the two infuriated combatants into calmness. If their efforts are unavailing, the result may be either a suicide or a lawsuit.

Women of this type feel themselves at home in the courts, and a fit of anger will often send them hobbling off to the magistrate with some trumpery and usually false accusation against a relation or a neighbour. Such was a case brought by one Liu Hsia Shih against a harmless old man whose real offence was that he had recommended her to look after her babies instead of “cursing the street.” I despatched a constable to make enquiries into the matter, and she promptly handed him the princely sum of one dollar with the suggestion that he should give me a report favourable to herself. In accordance with very strict regulations relating to bribery, the constable paid the money into court. I summoned the parties to the suit, rebuked the female for attempted bribery, and in dismissing her frivolous action adjudged the dollar to her adversary. Probably the fact that he had got her money was in her view even more exasperating than the loss of her case.

Very frequently a *ma-chieh-ti* who brings her imagined wrongs to court will point to wounds and scratches on her face and body as evidence that she has been assaulted: whereas the injuries have been in all probability self-inflicted. One Liang Wang Shih brought complaints of ill-treatment against her adopted grandson and his wife. “They behave in a most cruel manner,” she said. “He incites her to bite me. She



bites my shoulder." She then proceeded partially to disrobe herself in order that the supposed marks of her grand-daughter's teeth might be inspected by the court. Another querulous woman forcibly prevented a neighbour from putting a wall round his own vegetable-garden. "I recently built a new house," explained her unfortunate neighbour. "This woman's grandson died soon afterwards, and she declares that it was my new house that killed him, by spoiling the *fêng-shui* of her family. She says she will not let me build my garden-wall until I restore her grandson to life."

The marriage customs of Weihaiwei being in principle identical with those prevailing in other parts of China, a detailed description of them would be out of place here. It will be sufficient to say that nearly every one gets married a few years after arrival at a marriageable age, the bridegroom being as a rule rather older than the bride. The majority of marriages are the outcome of long-standing betrothals. A betrothal is in practice as binding as a marriage; indeed, a betrothal that took place in the babyhood of both the principals may, in certain circumstances, be regarded as an actual marriage. If, for example, the youth dies when of marriageable age but before the marriage has taken place, and if he was at the same time an only son, the betrothed girl (whom he may or may not have seen) will often be recognised as his legal wife; and if she preserves her "widowhood" with fidelity her name will appear beside his own on the tombstone and in the family registers. If the girl declares at the death of her betrothed that she is willing to be regarded as his widow, it then becomes possible (in accordance with an old and very curious custom) for the dead youth and his living wife to be provided with a "son" by adoption, and this "son"—who will probably be a young nephew—nominally acts as principal mourner at the funeral, inherits the deceased's share of the family property, and carries on the rites

of ancestral worship. If the girl or her family decline (as very naturally they usually do) to recognise the betrothal contract as binding after the bridegroom's death, the parents of the dead youth will proceed to find him a bride in the person of a dead girl. This girl must have died unmarried and should be of suitable age and family: that is to say, a youth and maiden who could not have been betrothed to each other in life should not be joined in matrimony after death.<sup>1</sup>

The arrangements for a wedding of this extraordinary nature are not carried out directly by the parents of the dead boy and girl, but through middlemen appointed by them (known as *kuei mei* or "ghostly go-betweens"), and many of the other formalities which attend an ordinary marriage are observed with scrupulous care. If the girl has already been buried in the graveyard of her own family her body is exhumed and reburied beside that of the dead bridegroom: and on the tombstone erected at the foot of the grave are duly carved their two names as those of husband and wife. The custom is extremely old: it is mentioned in the *Chou Li*, a book which deals with the laws and customs of China from the twelfth century B.C. onwards. Its origin may perhaps be traced to the same notions that lay at the root of the widely-prevalent Oriental custom of widow immolation or *sati*: the theory being that the sacrifice of widows and slaves at the tomb of a dead man provided him in the comfortless world of shades with the companionship to which he had been accustomed in life. But this strange system of weddings between the dead is practised to-day in Weihaiwei only in order to secure the perpetuation of the sacrificial rites connected with the ancestral cult and to bring about a suitable partition of the family property.

If a youth dies unmarried and is an only son, the necessary consequence would appear to be the ex-

<sup>1</sup> Mere disparity of age, however, is not regarded as an insuperable objection to a "dead marriage."



tion of the family or the particular branch which the deceased represented. To prevent the occurrence of such a calamity it is necessary in China to provide the deceased with a son by formal adoption. But the matter-of-fact Chinese mind declines to contemplate the possibility of adopting a son for one who, being a bachelor, was not in a position to have a legitimate heir in the ordinary process of nature. It is therefore necessary to begin by providing him with a wife; and this is done by the peculiar arrangement just described, known locally as *ka* (or *chieh*) *ssü ch'in*—the “celebration of a dead marriage.” As a rule it is not difficult for parents to find a suitable wife for their dead son, for the family of a girl who has died unmarried will always be glad to have their deceased daughter raised to the honourable status of a married woman. Sometimes, however, complicating circumstances arise. A man named Yü Huai-yüeh died, without children and unmarried, in the tenth year of Kuang Hsü—corresponding to 1884. At that time he had brothers living, and as the family was in no danger of extinction it was not considered necessary to take further action. During subsequent years the brothers also died without issue, and the sorrowing relatives of the family decided in 1897 that Yü Huai-yüeh should at last be provided with a wife. In due time it was reported by “ghostly go-betweens” that a bride with a suitable horoscope was to be found in the family of Hsia of the neighbouring village of Chao Chia. This was a girl who had died as long ago as 1876. In spite of the disparity of the dates of death the ceremony was duly performed: thus a bride who had been in her grave for more than a generation was wedded to a bridegroom who died thirteen years before his own marriage.

In ordinary cases the repudiation of a betrothal contract while the principals are both living is by law and custom visited by heavy penalties. Paradoxical as the statement may appear, it is often easier in

China to get rid of a wife after the marriage ceremony has taken place than to jilt her during the period of betrothal. There is little or no romance about a Chinese engagement. The parents of bride and bridegroom may or may not be known to each other; as a rule they are strangers, for a girl is rarely married to a resident in her own village. The reasons for this are not far to seek. As we have seen, a typical Weihaiwei village is composed of persons of one surname. The "prohibited degrees" in China are far more comprehensive than those set forth in the English Book of Common Prayer. All persons of the same surname are regarded as blood relations, and as such they cannot intermarry. The father of a family must therefore find husbands and wives for his children in some village other than his own. In accordance with venerable custom, regular marriages are negotiated neither by the parties chiefly concerned nor by their parents. Betrothals are always in practice arranged through go-betweens or middlemen (*mei jên*) who are understood to be the disinterested friends of both the contracting parties. In return for their services they receive various little presents and welcome invitations to sundry little feasts.<sup>1</sup>

It is often declared that in China the bridegroom never has a chance of seeing his bride or making her acquaintance until the fateful moment when she raises her bridal veil: and many are the sad stories told of the bitter disappointment of the girl who unexpectedly finds that her husband is a decrepit old man, or the ardent young bridegroom who suddenly realises that he is lord of an ugly or sour-faced wife instead of the dainty beauty described by the deceitful go-between.

<sup>1</sup> The custom of employing go-betweens is by no means exclusively Chinese. It may be met with among races so far away as certain of the tribes of British Columbia. (See Hill Tout's *British North America*, p. 186.) For an ancient reference to the Chinese custom, see *Shih Ching*, p. 157 (Legge).





THREE WOMEN AND A HAYRICK (see p' 207).

p. 206]



THREE GENERATIONS—AT THE VILLAGE GRINDSTONE  
(see p. 246).





But such regrettable incidents are rare in rural China. It is true that marriage is hardly ever preceded by love-making, and that young people have as a rule absolutely no say in the important matter of the choice of a husband. Yet the women of the farming classes in a rural district such as Weihaiwei are by no means concealed from public view; if a young man does not catch a sight of his betrothed at some village festival or a theatrical performance he is sure to have many opportunities of beholding her at work in the fields at harvest time or washing clothes at the side of the local brook. Sometimes, indeed, the young couple grow up together in the same household almost like brother and sister. This happens when, after child-betrothal has taken place, the girl's parents die or are too poor to keep her. She then passes to the bridegroom's family and is theoretically supposed to be brought up as a daughter of the house, though sometimes she is treated as a mere servant or drudge. Such a girl is known as a *t'uan-yüan hsi-fu*. As an orphan, or the daughter of poor or helpless parents, she is expected to cultivate a more than usually meek and respectful demeanour towards the parents of her betrothed, and to be "thankful for small mercies." When the boy's parents (for the boy himself has no say in the matter) decide that a fitting time for the marriage has arrived, it is customary for the girl to be sent temporarily to the care of some relative, where she remains until the wedding-day. This is in order that in accordance with the usual custom she may enjoy the privilege of being carried to her husband's home in a red marriage-chair. In such a case as this the bride and bridegroom are of course well acquainted with each other's personal appearance and disposition, and have good reason to know, before the wedding takes place, whether their married life is likely to be a happy one. If the prospects are adverse, the bridegroom-elect can only escape his doom by running away, for the betrothal

cannot be repudiated. The bride, poor child, has no choice in the matter one way or another.

Marriages in Weiheiwei—in spite of the optimistic dictum of the Chinese chronicler already quoted—are very often, like marriages elsewhere, negotiated in a mercenary spirit and with a keen eye to “business.” The Roman *coemptio* was undoubtedly in origin a system of marriage by purchase; and perhaps the practice if not the theory is in many Western countries the same to-day. In rural China the average father wants to procure for his son the best possible wife at the lowest possible cost; the girl’s father wants to give his daughter to the family that will allow him the largest compensation for his own outlay. The financial part of the arrangements is so prominent in the minds of the plain-speaking peasants of Weihaiwei that they will talk of buying and selling their wives and daughters in much the same way as they would talk of dealing in farm produce at the neighbouring market. The local practice (as apart from the law of China) in matters concerning marriage is in some respects curious. “My wife has run away from me,” stated a petitioner. “She lived with me nearly three years. I know where she is, but I cannot make her come back to me because I originally got her for nothing. She left me because I was too poor. She took away with her nothing that was not her own. I have no complaint to make against her.”

The people of Weihaiwei know nothing of regular divorce proceedings. The man whose wife deserts him or runs away with another man may proceed to take unto himself a second wife without the least fear of a Crown prosecution for bigamy. Under Chinese law a man may, indeed, regularly divorce his wife for a variety of offences—including rudeness to his parents and talkativeness—but in Weihaiwei few husbands avail themselves of their rights in this respect; in the first place the husband is reluctant—especially if he is still childless—to lose the lady for whom he or his



parents paid a good round sum in cash, and, secondly, he is afraid of getting into trouble with her family, who will quite probably drag him before the magistrate on a charge of brutal treatment of a gentle and long-suffering wife—their object being to “save face” and to extract from the husband substantial pecuniary compensation. If his wife’s family is numerous and wealthy, the unhappy man who is wedded to an untamable shrew is often driven to desperate expedients to break his chains. He may, indeed, emigrate to Peking or Manchuria—the usual resorts of persons who find life unbearable in Weihaiwei—but this will only result in shifting the trouble from his own shoulders to those of his parents or brothers.

Only a few days before the penning of these lines a man named Shih Kuan-yung came to report to me the mysterious death of his younger brother. “His wife treated him shamefully,” was the story. “He bore it for several years, but the breaking-point came two days ago. He then went off to his father-in-law’s house, and yesterday he died there.” On inquiry it turned out that the wretched man, after an unusually bitter passage of words with his wife, swallowed a dose of poison and then went off to die in his wife’s father’s house as a protest against his wife’s bad conduct and as a sure means of bringing trouble upon her relations. His brother suggested to the court that he, as the deceased’s only surviving relative, should be empowered to sell the widow and pocket the proceeds as a solace for his bereavement. The court refused to act upon this suggestion, but satisfied public opinion by imposing a moderate punishment on the lady’s family and compelling it to defray all the expenses of the funeral.

The fact that the husband in this case could think of no better means of punishing his wife than by dying on her father’s doorstep shows that though a woman on marriage theoretically passes from one *patria potestas* to another and thenceforward belongs

solely to her husband's family or *p'o chia*, her father's family or *niang-chia* may in certain circumstances retain considerable influence over her destiny as a married woman; and if the family is rich and influential it may make matters intensely disagreeable for the husband and his relations should the woman find her new home less comfortable than the old one. The woman whose *niang-chia* is poor and without influence (as we have seen in the case of a *t'uan-yüan hsi-fu*) rarely dares to hold her head high or treat her *p'o chia* with contempt. She knows that henceforth it will be to her own interest to please her husband and his parents as far as in her lies, for she can look for no help from her father's family in the event of trouble. It is a terrible grief to a young married woman to know that her own family has made up its mind to take no further interest in her. A headman once reported to me that a woman in his village, recently married, had committed suicide simply because when the time came for her to pay the first ceremonial visit to her father and mother after her wedding, no one was sent (in accordance with the usual custom) from her old home to escort her thither. For several days she moped and moaned, her incessant cry being, "I have no *niang-chia*, I have no *niang-chia*"; and one day her husband found her hanging dead from a peg in the wall.

Sometimes a girl's family will evince no interest whatever in her doings as a married woman until her suicide gives them an opportunity of showing that "blood is thicker than water." If they do not demand a magisterial enquiry into the cause of death they will at least keep a careful eye on the funeral arrangements and prevent the widower's family from carrying them out with insufficient splendour or too much regard to economy. An expensive funeral on such an occasion is satisfactory to the dead woman's relations from two points of view: it reflects glory on themselves and gives them "face," and it serves as a costly



punishment for the bereaved husband who has to pay the bill.

Though nearly every one in Weihaiwei, as in the rest of China, gets married sooner or later, it sometimes happens that through the early death of his betrothed or some other unavoidable cause a man finds himself still unmarried at an age when his contemporaries are the proud parents of large families. The older he is the harder will it be for him to contract a marriage through the customary process of a formal betrothal. He may indeed find a widow who is open to receive an advantageous offer; but in China it is not considered creditable or fitting for a widow to re-marry unless dire poverty compels her to do so. The model Chinese widow is expected to serve and cherish her late husband's parents as long as they live, and to devote her spare time to the careful upbringing of her own children. A woman's second marriage is not attended by the pomp and circumstance of the first. It is only once in her life that a Chinese woman is entitled to sit in the red chair of a bride. A common practice for an elderly bachelor of Weihaiwei is to entrust a friend in Peking or some other large centre of population with the task of procuring a wife for him by the simple expedient of cash-purchase. The friend buys the woman and brings her back to Weihaiwei on one of his return visits; and, as he will very likely have been entrusted with several similar commissions, he will possibly return with a bevy of damsels of varying charms and widely different ages and degrees of comeliness. He is not, of course, expected to go through his trouble for nothing; and indeed the business is regarded as so lucrative that some men will secretly tout for commissions to buy wives, and will go from Weihaiwei to Peking for that express purpose.

The practice is, of course, highly discreditable to every one concerned. It is a punishable offence in China, and is sternly reprobated and discouraged by

the British Government. As far as the women themselves are concerned, however, the abuses that attend the system are less serious than might be expected. In most cases they are the daughters of extremely poor parents who cannot afford to support them. By becoming the wives of poor but honest and respectable farmers in a district like Weihaiwei, their position has certainly changed for the better. Most of them are thoroughly cognisant of this fact; indeed, it is rarely that they express a desire to leave their new homes even when the Government offers them a free passage back to their native place. Their position, be it remembered, is not a dishonourable one. Though not always married according to the prescribed rites, they are by general consent regarded as wives, and their children inherit the family property as legitimate heirs. Sometimes, indeed, a poor girl from Peking, who has been led to expect that she is being taken to a rich young husband, feels a pang of bitter disappointment when she finds herself face to face with a poor and elderly man whose entire savings have been exhausted by the purchase of herself; yet in nine cases out of ten she accepts with resignation what the gods have given her, and settles down to the quiet life of a well-behaved matron. It is indeed to the interest of the woman's purchaser that he should treat her with kindness, for if she becomes seriously dissatisfied she may cause him endless discomfort.

Not long ago eight men came to the South Division court at Weihaiwei with a petition on behalf of one of their relatives, Yü K'o-chih, who was married to a woman named Chao Shih, imported from Peking. She had been selected and purchased for him in Peking by his brother, Yü K'o-shun. Now this woman, explained the petitioners, was unfortunately addicted to the luxurious habits and customs in vogue at the capital, and took no pains to adapt herself to the simple life of Weihaiwei. Chao Shih was, in fact, a self-willed person who did exactly what she chose, and



when any one remonstrated with her she threatened to run away. Matters remained in this unsatisfactory condition until she at last carried out her threat and disappeared. She was traced to Weihaiwei city, a distance of about twelve miles. Her husband's brother, Yü K'o-shun,<sup>1</sup> accompanied by some of his relatives, went in pursuit of the fugitive, tracked her to her hiding-place, and hired a cart to convey her back to her husband. She resolutely refused to get into the cart and also declined to accept the alternative of riding a mule. She was finally carried off by force and the party set out on the homeward journey. Unfortunately the woman kicked and screamed incessantly, thereby making such a disturbance on the highway that a detective who happened to meet the noisy procession came to the conclusion that it was a case of kidnapping, and promptly arrested the whole party. The petitioners now requested that since the matter had been clearly explained the magistrate would issue an order for the release of the prisoners and allow the troublesome Chao Shih to be returned to the arms of her anxious husband. The magistrate's difficulty in this case was unexpectedly solved by the lady herself, who assured the court that she was weary of a roving life and promised to be a good and dutiful wife for the rest of her days.

Certainly the system of procuring wives from Peking is liable to produce disappointments that are not all on the side of the women. Listen to the tale of woe of one Chung Yen-shêng, a Weihaiwei resident who in an ill-starred hour had decided to obtain for himself a wife from the capital. "I have tried to make the best of her for over two years," he said in court, "but it was no good. When I bought her I didn't know she was an opium-smoker,

<sup>1</sup> It is worth noting that it was not the husband who took the next step but the husband's brother, by whom the woman had been brought from Peking and who was held responsible by his brother and the clan generally for her "success" as a family investment.

but she was. I bought her for forty-eight taels (between seven and eight pounds sterling). What with travelling expenses and clothes she cost me altogether seventy taels before she arrived in Weihaiwei. She was a failure. She was very extravagant, and I had to sell some of my land to satisfy her. She suddenly left me of her own accord in the tenth moon of last year. She went to K'ung Chia village. I was glad to get rid of her. She went to the house of K'ung Fu-hsiang. I met him afterwards and I told him he might keep the woman for all I cared, but I wanted some of my money back. He gave me forty-five taels. I think I ought to get sixty, and I have come to court to obtain a judgment against him for the balance of fifteen taels. (Cross-examined) I would not take the woman back on any account. I have no children, but I shall not look for another wife. My younger brother's branch can carry on the ancestral worship of our family."

The old belief, long held by Europeans, that the Chinese habitually practise polygamy probably became extinct some years ago. The fact is, of course, that a Chinese has only one wife, though he may possess legally recognised concubines. Among the agricultural classes in China concubinage is not common, and in Weihaiwei it is comparatively rare. The farmer who takes unto himself a concubine does it not only with the knowledge but usually with the full approval of his wife, and as a duty which (if his wife is childless) he owes to his ancestors. So far as British experience goes in Weihaiwei the practice is not productive of evil effects. If both a wife and a concubine become mothers, the family property, when the time for partition arrives, is divided equally among all the sons without any discrimination.<sup>1</sup> But it sometimes happens that another child is born after the partition (*fên-chia* <sup>2</sup>)

<sup>1</sup> By a peculiar fiction the children of a concubine are regarded as the wife's children.

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 149 *seq.*



has already taken place. If the mother of such child is the *ch'i* or wife, the whole of the family property will again be put as it were into the melting-pot and re-divided—the latest-born child being entitled to a share equal to that of each of his brothers. But if the child's mother is only a concubine there will be no repartition, and either the child will be given a portion of his parents' *yang-lao-ti*<sup>1</sup> or his brothers will be morally obliged to make suitable provision for him out of their respective shares. Practically, therefore, there is very little difference in position between a wife's son and a concubine's son.

A modified form of domestic slavery is occasionally found in Weihaiwei<sup>\*</sup> as elsewhere in China: though slavery is indeed much too harsh a term to apply to a form of service which is totally devoid of hardship or degradation. The Chinese are as a rule indulgent masters and are hardly ever (in the part of China with which we are dealing) guilty of deliberate cruelty towards the inferior members of their households. The so-called slaves are generally bought as young girls from poor parents or guardians for the purpose of domestic service. They are treated as subordinate members of the family, and as a rule partake of much the same fare as their masters and mistresses. Their owners are responsible for their good health and moral character, and are expected to help them in due time to obtain respectable husbands. The great majority of the people of Weihaiwei, being only small farmers, are compelled to do their own house-work unaided: slave-girls are thus found only in a few of the most prosperous households. An instance will show that in spite of the indulgent treatment accorded to them, slave-girls are regarded as the absolute property of their purchasers.

A petitioner named Ch'ü Wên-k'uei complained of "the unlawful annexation of a female slave" of whom he declared himself to be the rightful owner. "Five

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 149 *seq.*

years ago I became by formal adoption the son of my father's elder brother, who died childless. His widow, my adoptive mother, bought a slave-girl two years ago for the sum of one hundred dollars. My aunt and adoptive mother died two months ago and I have inherited her property. The slave-girl is part of the property and therefore by right belongs to me. Unfortunately a short time before her death my adoptive mother lent the slave-girl to the Ts'ung family, and the Ts'ung family now refuses to hand her over to me on the plea that she has been betrothed to one of the little Ts'ungs. As I gave no consent to her betrothal I consider it null and void, and I petition for an order of the court requiring the Ts'ung family to return my slave-girl without further ado." To the surprise of both parties the court allowed the question of her disposal to be decided by the slave-girl herself, and she elected to stay with the family of her betrothed.



## CHAPTER X

### WIDOWS AND CHILDREN

THE remarriage of a widow is, as we have seen, regarded in the best circles with disapproval. The model wife—the wife to whom a commemorative arch is erected on the roadside near her home and whose name is handed down to posterity in the official chronicle of her district as a pattern of virtue—is as scrupulously faithful to her husband after his death as during his life. But very poor families—such as are the majority of the families of Weihaiwei—cannot afford to support widows for the mere joy of contemplating their fidelity and chastity: hence we find that in practice a young widow is often not only induced by her late husband's family to enter into a second marriage and so rid them of the necessity of supporting her, but is practically compelled to get married before the expiration of the period of deep mourning, which lasts twenty-seven months. For a widow to remarry while in mourning for her husband is by Chinese law a penal offence: though when the offence is committed on account of the straitened circumstances of the widow and her first husband's family it is generally allowed to pass without official notice or censure.

If a young widow has presented her late husband with children it is less likely that his family will insist upon a second marriage than if she is childless:

indeed, if the family is well-to-do, it will sometimes take active preventive measures if she herself contemplates such a step. When a widow with children remarries, the children remain with the first husband's family, or at any rate revert to that family after the years of early childhood. It is when a childless young widow, in spite of the solicitations of her husband's family, obstinately refuses to take a second husband that domestic troubles arise which are likely to end in the law-courts. If the widow's father-in-law finds it impossible to remove her aversion to a second marriage he will probably come to the court with a trumped-up charge against her of "unfilial" behaviour. One Chang Yün-shêng brought an action in my court against his deceased son's wife, who was a daughter of the Lin family, for cruelty and want of respect. "She is disobedient," he said; "she refuses to feed me, and she constantly assaults and vilifies my wife and myself. In our old age we find such conduct on the part of our daughter-in-law intolerable, and I implore the court to devise some means of recalling her to a sense of duty and obedience."

The case soon wore a different aspect when the woman's father, Lin Pa, put in an appearance and explained that Chang's sole object in making a series of false and unjust accusations against a blameless young woman was that he might be sure of magisterial sympathy and help in the matter of compelling her to accept a second marriage. This on investigation was found to be the key to the situation. Chang regarded the woman as a family asset which he desired to realise in cash. Her remarriage would have been negotiated purely as a mercantile transaction, the profits of which would have gone into the money-bags of Chang. As the covetous old man was well able to support his son's wife—indeed she was living without expense to him on the property which had come to her husband before his death as



a result of *fên-chia*<sup>1</sup>—the court required him to find substantial security that in no circumstances would he attempt to dispose of the person of his daughter-in-law against her will. The interference of the woman's father in this case affords another proof that a woman's own family does not necessarily abandon her for ever to the caprice of the family into which she has married.

Chinese local histories contain many accounts of the various devices resorted to by devoted widows for the purpose of avoiding the dishonour of a second marriage. De Groot<sup>2</sup> quotes the case of a child-widow—she was only fifteen years of age—who, as a reply to the demands made upon her to enter into a second marriage, took a solemn oath of chastity and confirmed it by cutting off her ears and placing them on a dish. Thereupon, as the historian says, her relatives “gave up their project,” perhaps from pity or admiration of the poor child's heroic conduct, perhaps from the belief that no self-respecting man would care for an earless bride. If the annals of Weihaiwei show no cases quite identical with this, they contain accounts of many a young widow who has died to avoid remarriage.

But first let us consider a few typical cases of a less tragic nature. Of Wang Shih, the wife of a graduate named Ch'i, we are told that when her husband died leaving her with an infant boy, she, though still a very young woman, refrained from a second marriage, lived an exemplary life, educated her boy with exceptional care, and survived to the age of ninety-five: living just long enough to witness the

<sup>1</sup> See p. 149. But it should be noted that if the old man had persuaded her to remarry, this property would have reverted to himself or his family, and would perhaps have been added to his *yang-lao-ti* (see pp. 149 *seq.*). A widow has only a life-interest in her husband's real property, and even that life-interest is extinguished if she marries into another family.

<sup>2</sup> *Religious System of China*, vol. ii. bk. 1, p. 466.

marriage of her great-grandson. To live to a green old age is regarded as one of the rewards of a virtuous life. In China, those whom the gods love die old. Ch'ê Liu Shih, say the Annals of Ning-hai, was for similar reasons rewarded by no less than one hundred and two years of life. This was in the present dynasty. Judging by length of life, still higher virtue must have been shown in the Yüan dynasty (1280-1367), for we read of Liu Shih, a lady who lived to the age of one hundred and three, and was celebrated as the happy mother of three noble sons. T'ang Chu Shih, a Ning-hai widow of the Ming dynasty, became so famous for her virtuous refusals of marriage that she was honoured by the local magistrate with the official presentation of a laudatory scroll bearing the words "Pure and chaste as frozen snow." Wang Sun Shih became a grass-widow about ten days after her marriage, for her husband was obliged to go abroad. After a short absence news was brought her that her lord was dead. She was wretchedly poor, but she maintained an honourable widowhood to her death. Yüeh Ch'î Shih was left a widow soon after marriage. The family was very poor. She served her father-in-law and brought up her son with the utmost zeal and care. She was most industrious (all this is carefully recorded in the Annals) in looking after the household and in preparing the morning and evening meals. She worked all her ten fingers to the utmost without sparing herself. She died when still young. Sun Liu Shih became a widow at the age of nineteen. She strongly desired to die with her husband, but her parents-in-law pointed out that they were old and required her services. She obeyed and remained with them, refusing remarriage. She arranged to have a son adopted for her husband, and educated him with the utmost care and self-sacrifice. Wang Hsüeh Shih was left a widow at the age of twenty-five. She had a little son aged three. She brought him up to



manhood and arranged a marriage for him. Both her son and his bride died within a year. She then urged her father-in-law to take a concubine in order to carry on the family, for her late husband had been an only son. Some years later the Literary Chancellor of the Province presented an honorary tablet in commemoration of her virtue.

Cases of this kind—where young widows refuse remarriage and devote their lives to the service of their parents-in-law and their own children—are so common that in many parts of China they are the rule rather than the exception, though it is not every such case, of course, that comes before the notice of the authorities and receives official recognition. The matter of widows' suicides is one that perhaps deserves more careful attention.

Sociological writers have pointed to the steady increase in suicide as one of the most alarming characteristics of modern civilised life, inasmuch as it seems to indicate a biological deterioration of the race. Probably this is so in Europe, where religious and ethical teachings set so high a value on life that the man who deprives himself of it of his own accord is commonly regarded as either a criminal or a lunatic; but we must beware of supposing that if suicide indicates biological decay in England or Saxony it has the same indication among the populations of the Far East. The common view that Orientals despise life and will throw it away on the slenderest provocation is not, indeed, strictly accurate. Self-slaughter in Weihaiwei and throughout China is probably far commoner than anywhere in Europe, in spite of the numerous European suicides traceable to the appalling mental and moral degradation brought about by alcoholism; and there is no doubt that the Oriental will hang or poison himself for reasons which would be altogether insufficient to make the average European do so. But the Oriental will never take this extreme step except from a motive which from his

point of view is all-compelling : so that after all the only difference between the Oriental and the European in this respect seems to lie in the nature of the motive, not in its intensity.

That the instinct of self-preservation is stronger among Europeans than among Chinese is an unproved and perhaps unprovable thesis : though it is true that Chinese women seem to have a contempt for death which possibly arises from a quiescent imagination. One reason why suicides are less common among Europeans is that the would-be suicide in a country like England must not only face the natural fear of death and (if he happens to believe in the teachings of his Church) the probability or certainty of terrible sufferings in another state of existence, but he is also obliged to contemplate the dishonour that will besmirch his name and the consequent misery and discomfort that will be brought upon his family.

These deterrent considerations can seldom affect the would-be suicide in China. Both Confucianism and Buddhism, indeed, forbid self-destruction : but Confucianism is vague on the subject of life beyond the grave, and Buddhism as taught in China lays no stress on any terrors that may await the suicide. The northern Chinese, including those of Weihaiwei, are inclined to the belief that a suicide's only punishment consists in being obliged as a lonely earth-bound spirit to wander about in the neighbourhood of his old home until he can persuade some living person to follow his example. When his victim yields to his sinister suggestions and commits suicide the first ghost is set free : though what use he makes of his freedom seems to be a doubtful point. It then becomes the second ghost's turn to look for a victim. Thus all apparently motiveless suicides are supposed to be caused by the ghostly promptings of those who have taken their own lives in the past. When a suicide of this kind takes place in a Weihaiwei village it is believed that another suicide will inevitably follow within an extreme limit of two



years. Neither public opinion nor the law of the land stigmatises suicide as a crime: persons who attempt and fail to kill themselves are never prosecuted.

The attitude of the more philosophically-minded of the Chinese towards the subject of suicide in general is perhaps somewhat similar to that of the Stoic Epictetus, who on the one hand forbids it and on the other hand calls attention to the fact that the door out of life is always open to those who feel that they have good reason to use it. As for self-destruction involving dishonour in the eyes of society, this is so far from being the case in China that in certain circumstances the exact opposite is the result. Posthumous honours have been showered upon suicides by imperial edict, monuments have been erected to their memory, they have been canonised and their tablets honoured with official worship in the public temples, and they have bequeathed to their relatives and descendants a glory that shines undimmed for many successive generations.

These distinguished suicides, it should be hardly necessary to say, have generally been women, and the glory of their deed has consisted in the fidelity and heroism that have impelled them to follow their dead husbands to the grave: but many of them are noble-minded statesmen and patriots who have voluntarily sealed with their own blood some protest against the follies or mistakes of emperors or have taken their own lives as a means of drawing public attention to some grave danger that menaced the State.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> While this chapter was being written the newspapers reported a case of a patriot's suicide which may be cited as typical. "An Imperial Edict issued on September 5," says *The Times* of September 21, 1909, "bestowed posthumous honours upon the Metropolitan official Yung Lin, who recently 'sacrificed his life in order to display his patriotism.' The Edict is in reply to a memorial from the supervising censor of the Metropolitan circuit and others asking for the Imperial commendation of an act which has attracted great attention in Peking. Yung Lin, a Manchu of small official rank but high literary gifts, bemoaning the fate of his country, recently presented a petition to the Regent 'dealing

We are accustomed to "topsy-turvydom" in China, and perhaps the suicide-statistics might be cited as an example of this. "Suicide," says a recent writer on sociology, "is a phenomenon of which the male sex possesses almost the monopoly."<sup>1</sup> If *female* be substituted for *male* we have a fair statement of how affairs stand in Weihaiwei. Over ninety per cent. of the persons who make away with themselves belong to the female sex, and the great majority of them are young married women or young widows. Since 1729, when it was proclaimed by imperial decree that official honours were no longer to be conferred upon widows who slew themselves on the occasion of their husbands' death, it has become less common than formerly for young widows to practise the Chinese equivalent of *sati*, but the custom is far from extinct, and at any rate it seems to have left among women a readiness to fling away their lives for reasons which to us appear singularly inadequate. Imperial edicts did not and could not stamp out a custom which was of great antiquity and deeply rooted in popular esteem. The British Government in India forbade the practice of *sati* long ago, and it has therefore ceased to exist throughout

with the circumstances of the times, and then gave up his life.' Unable to present it in person, he sent his memorial to the Press. It is a model of finished literary style. Imperial approval will certainly be given to its official publication throughout the Empire." In the course of his memorial, in which he alluded to and bewailed the misfortunes of China and the crimes of those in high places, Yung Lin expressed his belief that unless reforms speedily take place, the "foreigners will seize the excuse of protection for chapels and Legations to increase their garrisons, while secretly pursuing their scheme for converting their sojourn in the land into ownership." He also makes some remarks which, though they would meet the hearty support of a Ruskin, will not be relished by foreign traders. Writing of the waste of the national resources, he says that "vast sums of money are frittered away in the purchase of useless foreign goods." After sending his memorial to the Press, Yung Lin cut his throat. The direct or indirect results of this affair will perhaps be more far-reaching than may at present be thought likely.

<sup>1</sup> G. Chatterton Hill, *Heredity and Selection in Sociology*, p. 187.





VILLAGE OF KU-SHAN-HOU, SHOWING HONORARY POLES IN  
 FRONT OF THE ANCESTRAL TEMPLE (see p. 324).  
 p. 224 }



MONUMENT TO FAITHFUL WIDOW, KU-SHAN-HOU  
 (see p. 225).





the Indian Empire; but even now there is strong reason to doubt whether popular opinion is on the side of the Government in this matter, and whether the custom would not immediately spring into vogue again if the British *raj* were withdrawn.<sup>1</sup>

There is no doubt that the suicide of widows in China is a survival of the ancient custom (which flourished in countries so far apart as India and Peru, Africa and China) whereby wives and slaves were as a matter of ordinary duty expected to follow their husbands and masters to the grave; and though the day has probably long gone past when such suicides were encouraged or actually enforced by the deceased's relatives, it cannot be doubted that to this day public opinion in China is strongly on the side of the widow who chooses to follow her lord to the world of ghosts.<sup>2</sup>

The present-day theory of the matter held by the people of eastern Shantung, including Weihaiwei, appears to be this. A woman undoubtedly performs a meritorious act in following her husband to the spirit-world, but her relations are fully justified in preventing her, and indeed are obliged to prevent her, from throwing away her life if they know of or guess her intention. If her husband has died leaving to her the care of his aged parents who have no other daughters-in-law to look after them, or if she has young children who require her care, she does wrong to commit suicide, though the children are sometimes ignored. The highest praise is reserved for a woman who temporarily refrains from destroying herself in order that she may devote herself to her husband's parents and her own offspring, but who, when they are dead or independent of her care, then fulfils her

<sup>1</sup> See Campbell Oman's *Cults, Customs and Superstitions of India* (Fisher Unwin: 1908), p. 108.

<sup>2</sup> Cases in modern times where Chinese widows have actually been compelled to commit suicide on their husbands' death are referred to in Smith's *Chinese Characteristics* (5th ed.), p. 215.

original desire and sacrifices herself to the spirit of her dead husband. The fact that in any case the woman's relatives are considered bound to prevent, if possible, the act of suicide from taking place, shows the beginning of a realisation that self-destruction is in itself an evil. Time was when they would not only make no attempt to save the woman's life, but, as in India, would incite her and even compel her to die.

Of the stories of widows' suicides which have taken place during the past few centuries in Weihaiwei and its neighbourhood, and which were considered meritorious enough to deserve public honours and special mention in the official Annals, a few examples may be found of interest. The cases quoted are in no way unique or unusual, and there is no reason to doubt their absolute authenticity.

Tsou Chao-tuan being sick of a mortal disease, his wife Ts'ung Shih and his concubine Sun Shih made an agreement with one another that they would follow him to death. As soon as he was dead the two women hanged themselves. Members of the family quickly came to the rescue and cut the ropes by which the women were suspended. Sun Shih the concubine was already dead, but Ts'ung Shih the wife revived. A few days later she again hanged herself, this time successfully. The wife was thirty years of age, the concubine nineteen. The district-magistrate took official notice of the matter, and caused a carved memorial to be set up testifying to the two women's exemplary virtue. "They had performed an act," he said, "which would cause their fragrant names to be remembered for ever."

T'ao Liu Shih, daughter of Liu Fang-ch'ing, was betrothed to one T'ao, but they were not married. T'ao died. When the death was announced to her she hanged herself. [To appreciate the significance of this act it should be remembered that there was no question of love-sickness: the young couple in all probability had never spoken to or even seen each



other. As will be understood from explanations already given,<sup>1</sup> the girl would as a matter of course be buried with her betrothed as his wife, and would be given his name on the tombstone and the ancestral tablets. Probably the youth's parents, in this as in most similar cases, adopted a son for the dead couple; if so he would be brought up to regard them as his father and mother, and would inherit their property. Had the girl refrained from suicide and married some one else, the family of the first betrothed might have provided him with a dead wife, in accordance with the practice already described.<sup>2</sup>]

Chang Sun Shih, aged twenty-six, was the wife of Chang Ch'ing-kuang. On the death of her husband she took an oath to follow him. The family forcibly prevented her from killing herself. She pretended to submit to life and to the rearing of her young child, so gradually the family forbore to watch her. She then suddenly hanged herself.

Li Chu Shih, aged twenty-one, was the wife of Li T'ing-lun. Her husband died, leaving her without children. She killed herself by jumping into a well. A stone memorial to her is extant.

Ch'ên Yang Shih was the wife of Ch'ên Yüan-fu. On the death of her husband she starved herself to death.

Pi Yü Shih, wife of Pi Ch'ang-jên, hanged herself by the side of her husband's coffin. [Voluntary death beside the coffin is exceedingly common and seems to represent an ancient custom.]

Chang T'ang Shih was the wife of Chang Ching-wên. On her husband's death she devoted herself to bringing up a young daughter. She preserved a chaste widowhood till the death of her daughter, and then hanged herself.

Pi Chang Shih was the wife of Pi Hung-fan. Her husband when dying gave instructions that as she

<sup>1</sup> See p. 203.

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 204 *seq.*

was still young a second marriage was to be arranged for her. To please him she said she would obey him. They were childless. When he died her first action was to see that her late husband was duly provided with an heir and successor, and she did this by bringing about the formal adoption of one of his nephews. She then proceeded to arrange a marriage for the nephew so that the eventual continuation of the family might be properly provided for. "Now," she said, "my duty is done. What is a lonely widow to go on living for?" She then committed suicide.

Li Wang Shih was the wife of Li Yuan-po. When her husband was ill she waited until he had only two more days to live, and then hanged herself. [The question naturally arises, who tended the sick husband during the last two days? The woman's own view might have been that by dying first she would be ready to meet and help her husband's spirit when it had crossed the dark flood, and would thus render him greater service than by merely tending his last hours on earth. But a better explanation of her action is given by the details furnished by the chronicler in connection with the next case.]

Sun Shih, a Weihaiwei woman, had a dying husband. Fearing that his last moments might be embittered by the thought that she would marry some one else after his death she decided to hang herself before he passed away, so that he would know she had remained true till death. She therefore hanged herself, and a day later her husband died. This happened in the Ming period, and in 1585 a monument was erected to her memory.

Liang Wang Shih, aged twenty-one, was the wife of Liang K'o-jun. At the time of her husband's death she was pregnant, so she did not destroy herself immediately. In due time she gave birth to her child—a daughter—who, however, soon died. She thereupon committed suicide.

Liu Ch'ên Shih, aged twenty-eight, was the wife of



Liu Shêng. On her husband's death the family feared she would hang herself, so they watched her with special care. She smilingly assured them that she had no such intention, so they relaxed their watchfulness. She then hanged herself.

Hou Wang Shih tried to hang herself on the death of her husband. Some female neighbours came in and saved her life: but she awaited another opportunity and died by her own hand.

Chiang Lin Shih was a young bride. Two months after her marriage her husband had to go away on business, and on the road he fell in with a band of robbers and was killed by them. On hearing the news she hanged herself.

Sung Wang Shih attempted to hang herself on the death of her husband, but owing to the intervention of friends she was restored to life. A second time she tried to hang herself, but the rope broke and her purpose remained unfulfilled. Then she took poison, but the dose was insufficient and she revived. Then the family tried to compel her to marry again; but she tore her face with her nails till it streamed with blood and resolutely refused to entertain the suggestion of a second marriage. Finally she retired to her private apartment and succeeded in strangling herself.

Wang Chao Shih was the wife of an hereditary *chih-hui*<sup>1</sup> of Ning-hai, in the Ming dynasty. Her husband died a month after the wedding. She remained faithful to him, and finally hanged herself. Two maid-servants followed her example.

Wang Sun Shih was the concubine of a *chih-hui*. Her husband was killed in battle. On hearing the news she hanged herself.

Yü Lu Shih swore on the death of her husband that she would not live alone. Her family wept bitterly and begged her to give up her intention to die, but she replied, "I look upon death as a going home.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 47.

The wise will understand me." Then in the nighttime she strangled herself.

Liu Shih, the daughter of Liu Fang-ch'ing of Ch'êng-shan (the Shantung Promontory) was betrothed to a Weihaiwei man named T'ao Tu-shêng. A "lucky day" was chosen for the marriage, and the bride was being escorted to her new home on that day when the news was brought her of the bridegroom's sudden death. She wished to follow him to the grave,<sup>1</sup> but her father and mother prevented her from carrying out her wish. When they began to relax their watchfulness she hanged herself. The district-magistrate presented an honorary scroll to the family to commemorate the girl's fidelity and chastity.

Chou Ch'i Shih was the wife of a literary student. Her husband died, and she hanged herself on the following New Year's Eve.

Tung Tu Shih was the second wife of a graduate. On her husband's death she starved herself to death. An edict was issued authorising the erection of an honorific portal.

Chang Shih was betrothed in childhood to a man named Yüan. He died before the marriage took place, when the girl was only sixteen. She begged to be allowed to carry out the full mourning rites prescribed for a widow, but her family would not hear of it.<sup>2</sup> She then hanged herself. In the Shun Chih period (1644-61) a decree was received authorising the erection of a commemorative portal. She and her betrothed were buried together as man and wife. The portal was erected at the side of the tomb. Elegies, funeral odes, essays, scrolls containing laudatory couplets, were composed by many of the

<sup>1</sup> The technical term almost invariably used for this action is *hsün*, which is the word used for the old practice of *burying alive with the dead*. In modern times, as in all these stories, the word signifies the death of a widow who commits suicide to prove her wifely fidelity.

<sup>2</sup> Obviously because they wished to arrange a new betrothal for her.



local poets and scholars in honour of this virtuous woman.

Liu Yü Shih was the wife of a man who died when he was away from home. She wailed for him bitterly, and said, "My husband is dead and it is my duty to go down to the grave with him: but he has left no son to carry on the ancestral sacrifices. Therefore my heart is ill at ease." She then sold her jewellery in order to provide money enough to enable her husband's younger brother to get married at once. A bride was selected and the marriage took place. In a year a boy was born, and Liu Yü Shih said, "Now my husband is no longer childless and I can close my eyes in death." That night she hanged herself. [It should be noted that in such a case as this it would be the duty of the younger brother to surrender one of his own sons in order that he might become the son and heir of the deceased. If the younger brother had only one son and there was no other relative of the appropriate generation available to become adopted son to the elder, the son would be allowed to inherit the property of his uncle and father and to carry on the ancestral rites for both. This is known as *shuang t'iao*.]

Yang Wang Shih was the wife of Yang Shih-ch'in. Twenty-seven days after the death of her husband she gave birth to a boy, who died within a year. She then devoted herself to the care of her (husband's) parents. A year or two later her father-in-law died, and the year after that her mother-in-law died too. The young widow mourned unceasingly, saying, "My husband and son are dead, my parents too have gone to their long home, how dare I continue to exist between earth and sky?" Then she begged the elders of the family to arrange the matter of adopting a son for her late husband, and then she hanged herself.

Ch'ang Li Shih was married to a man who died in the reign of K'ang Hsi (1662-1722). She wished to

die with him, but she was with child and therefore forbore to carry out her wish. Shortly afterwards a child was born. It was a boy, who only lived seven days. Looking up to heaven she sighed bitterly, saying, "When my husband died I refrained from dying with him, for I hoped to become the mother of his child. Now the child, too, is gone. It is as though my husband had twice died. Can I bear to survive him all alone?" She then impressively urged her sisters-in-law (wives of her late husband's brothers) to serve their mother-in-law dutifully, and then took an oath to follow her lord to the lower world. Her first resolution was to hang herself. Her sisters-in-law kept watch on her so that she could not do this. Then she tried to take poison, but the family, full of pity and affection, kept her from this too. Full of vexation she cried out, "Am I to be the only one under all heaven who longs for death yet cannot die?" Then she resolutely set herself to starve to death. For many days she refused nourishment of any kind, and on the sixteenth day of her fast she died. Many were the funeral odes composed by noted poets in her honour, and in the reign of Ch'ien Lung (1736-95) an honorary archway was erected to her memory and her tablet was given a place in the local Shrine of Chastity and Filial Piety.

The last story of this kind to be quoted has not been extracted from the local Annals nor does it refer to events which actually took place in Weihaiwei; it was told me, however, by a Weihaiwei resident concerning a girl with whose family his own was distantly connected, and as it throws some light on certain Chinese customs and possesses a pathetic interest of its own though it is not essentially different from many other such stories, a little space may be found for it here.

A girl of eighteen years of age, named Chang Shih, had been betrothed since early childhood to a youth who lived in a neighbouring village, and the bridal



day was drawing near. It was going to be a great occasion for every one concerned, for both families were well-to-do and popular and the girl was known by all her friends to be as tender and lovable as she was graceful and beautiful. But over the family hung a cloud that burst as suddenly as a thunderstorm: for one day, when the family were eagerly looking forward to the great event of the marriage, the black news came of the illness and death of the bridegroom.

The parents of Chang Shih consulted together as to how they should break the news to their daughter, who though she had never seen or spoken to her betrothed had been brought up in full knowledge of the fact that some day she would be his wife. She heard their whispers, and with quick intuition felt certain that their conversation had some reference to herself. Going to her mother, she questioned her. "What bad news have you, mother?" she said. "Whatever it may be you must tell your daughter." For a moment or two the elder woman was afraid to speak plainly and showed embarrassment, but at last, breaking into sobs and tears, she told the dismal story. "My daughter's wedding-day was fixed and a happy marriage had been foretold. But now all our hopes are ruined, for my daughter's betrothed has closed his eyes." The girl's face showed no sign of emotion. Her mother wondered at this, for she knew that her daughter was highly strung, and was not one who could readily dissemble her feelings. Without a word Chang Shih turned away and retired to her own room. At this time she was gaily and carefully dressed like most young Chinese ladies of good family: her pretty face was powdered and rouged, and sweet-scented flowers and two little gold ornaments adorned her shining hair. When an hour later she appeared before her mother again she was almost unrecognisable. All trace of powder and rouge was washed from her face, so that she had become—as a European observer would have said—more beautiful than ever;

her long black hair, devoid of a single flower or ornament, was uncoiled and hung loosely over her shoulders; her handsome embroidered dress had been thrown off, and her lithe form was disfigured by a gown of coarse sackcloth.

"My poor child," exclaimed her mother in amazement, "how is it that you, who are still a maiden, have attired yourself like a widow? Are you not still a member of your father's house? Are we of such poor report that our daughter will be shunned by every family that has a son still unbetrothed? Take off those ill-omened clothes that speak to us only of death, and become again our gay little daughter who has yet before her many years of happy life. It will not be long before the go-betweens come knocking at our door with eager proposals of marriage for the fairest little lady in the whole prefecture."

The girl listened, but never a smile appeared on her face. "It is my mother's voice that speaks but the thoughts are not my mother's. Can I, your daughter, ever give myself to another man while my husband has gone all lonely down to the Yellow Springs?<sup>1</sup> I beseech you, my mother, grant your daughter's last request. In seven days' time my betrothed was to come to escort me to his home and I was to sit in the red marriage-chair and to be carried away to be his bride. I pray you, my mother, that my wedding-day may not be cancelled. When the spirit of my husband comes for me on that day I shall be ready." The girl's mother did her utmost to shake her daughter's resolution, for she loved her dearly, and feared the girl was concealing some dreadful intention in this strange request. But her words were quite without avail, and she soon left her daughter to talk matters over with her husband. It was not without some justifiable pride that they finally decided to humour her; for in China the girl who on the death of her betrothed renounces all thought of marriage

<sup>1</sup> The Under-world of disembodied souls.



with a living man and, by remaining faithful to the dead, embraces at the same instant wifedom and widowhood, brings glory and honour to her father's family and also to the family of the dead bridegroom. The emperor's representative—the head of the local civil government—will himself do homage to her steadfast virtue, and will doubtless convey to her parents some mark of imperial approval; while her native village will derive widespread fame from the fact that it had once been her home.

The bridegroom's parents, in the case before us, received with appreciative gladness the announcement of the girl's fixed determination to remain faithful to their son, and they readily agreed to fall in with her wish for the formality of a marriage between the living and the dead. Preparations for the strange wedding went on apace, and though there was no merriment and very little feasting, strangers who suddenly arrived on the scene would never have guessed that the bridegroom was lying stiff and cold with never a thought for the beautiful bride that was to be his.

Though marriages of this kind—so strange and perhaps shocking to Western notions—were by no means unknown, several years had elapsed since such a ceremony had taken place in the district, and the local interest shown in it was very great. On the day of the wedding two large palanquins—one red, the other green—were carried on stalwart shoulders from the bridegroom's house to that of the bride. At ordinary marriages in Shantung the bridegroom usually goes in the red chair to meet his bride while the green chair follows behind, generally empty.<sup>1</sup> On arrival at the bride's house the bridegroom is received with much ceremony and introduced to every one except his bride,

<sup>1</sup> In Peking and many other places the bridegroom does not *ying ch'in* or "go to meet the bride." He stays at home and awaits her arrival.

whom he is not allowed to see. Most of the introductions take place in a guest-room, where he is regaled with light refreshments. Meanwhile the red chair in which he arrived is taken into the inner courtyard to await the bride. As soon as it is announced that she is ready to start, the bridegroom takes ceremonious leave of the family and prepares for departure. The bride in her red chair goes in front, he—in the green chair this time—follows behind. Thus bride and bridegroom, who have not yet exchanged a word, set out for the bridegroom's home. There they are received by his relatives, and the other nuptial ceremonies follow in due course.

To outward appearance there was little to suggest any unusual circumstances in the marriage of Chang Shih. The red chair and green chair came to her house in the usual way; the only difference was that in the red chair there was no living bridegroom, only his *p'ai-wei*—a white strip of paper bearing his name and age and the important words *ling wei*—"the seat of the soul."<sup>1</sup>

On arrival at the home of Chang Shih, the *p'ai-wei* was taken with the deepest marks of respect out of the red chair and carried into the house. It was reverently placed on a small shrine in the guest-chamber, and in front of it were set a few small dishes of fruit and sweetmeats and several sticks of burning incense. Then every member of the family separately greeted it with a silent obeisance. When the time came for departure, the *p'ai-wei* was carefully carried out of doors again and placed in the green chair, the red one being now occupied by Chang Shih; and thus the strange bridal procession started home again, the soul of the

<sup>1</sup> This is a temporary tablet in which the soul of the deceased is supposed to reside till after the burial, when it is formally summoned to take up its abode in the wooden tablet intended to remain permanently in the possession of the family. In the present case the temporary tablet would be ceremonially destroyed by fire after it had served its purpose.



dead bridegroom escorting the body of the living bride. On arrival at the house the *p'ai-wei* was again taken out of its chair and set up in the large hall where the dead man's family and their guests were waiting to receive Chang Shih. For the time being her widow's sackcloth had been cast aside, and she was clad in the resplendent attire of a rich young bride. If her face bore signs of inward emotion they were totally concealed beneath powder and rouge, and not even her own parents could have told what thoughts or feelings were uppermost at that time in their beautiful daughter's mind. She went through the usual ceremonies that accompany a Chinese wedding, so far as they could be carried out without the living presence of the bridegroom.

Having paid the necessary reverence to Heaven and Earth, to the souls of the ancestors of her new family, and finally to the living members of that family in the order of their seniority, she retired to the room that would in happier circumstances have been the bridal chamber, and there she quickly divested herself of her gay wedding robes and reassumed the dress of a widow in deepest mourning. Her betrothed—her husband now—had already been laid in his coffin, but in accordance with the usual Chinese custom many days had to elapse between the coffining and the burial. Those days were devoted to the elaborate rites always observed at a well-conducted Chinese funeral, and the young girl having taken her place as chief mourner performed her painful duties in a manner that gained her renewed respect and admiration. At last came the day of the burial. From the home of the living to the home of the dead marched a long procession of wailing mourners robed in sackcloth; several bands of flute-players and other musicians went in front and behind; there were scatterers of paper money, coloured-flag bearers and trumpeters, whose duty it was to conciliate and keep at a distance evil spirits and ill-omened influences; there were lantern-bearers to

pilot the dead man's soul; there was a great paper image of the Road-clearing Spirit, borne in a draped and tasselled pavilion; there was a dark tabernacle containing the tablet to which the spirit of the deceased himself would in due course be summoned; there was the long streamer, the *ling ching* or Banner of the Soul; and there was the coffin itself, almost entirely concealed beneath its canopy, covered with richly embroidered scarlet draperies.

It is not usual, nowadays, in eastern Shantung, for the female mourners to accompany funeral processions throughout the whole sad journey, but on this occasion the widowed maiden acted in accordance with the ceremonies sanctioned by the sages of old,<sup>1</sup> for she followed the coffin all the way to the grave. Then at last the attendant mourners—members of her father's family and of the family of the dead—were for the first time admitted to the secret of her intentions. No sooner had the coffin been lowered than Chang Shih threw herself into the grave and lay across the coffin-lid face downwards, as if to embrace, for the first and last time, the husband whose form she had never seen in life nor in death. For a few moments her fellow-mourners waited in decorous silence until the violence of her passionate outburst should have spent itself, but seeing that she did not stir one of them at last begged her to leave the dead to the dead. "My place is by my husband," was the girl's reply. "If he is with the dead, then my place too is with the dead. Fill up the grave." To obey her behest was out of the question, and for some time no one stirred. Knowing the nature of the girl, her relatives felt sure that if they forcibly removed her from her present position and compelled her to return home with them she would seize the first opportunity of destroying herself.

Some one at last suggested that if they humoured

<sup>1</sup> See the *Chou Li*. In Peking and many other places the women still accompany the funeral party to the graveside.



her to the extent of sprinkling her with a light covering of earth which she could easily throw off as soon as the desire of life once more asserted itself, she might be permanently restored to a normal condition and all might be well. This suggestion was acted upon. Some handfuls of earth were thrown loosely over the living and the dead, each mourner, in accordance with custom, contributing a portion.<sup>1</sup> Having by this time concluded the sacrificial rites and ceremonies, the mourners now withdrew from the graveside. When some of the nearest relatives of Chang Shih returned an hour later they found that the light covering of earth had not been disturbed. The desire of life had never asserted itself after all. The girl was dead.

Carefully and tenderly she was taken up and brought back to the sad bridal chamber that had witnessed no bridal. Long before her beautiful body had been prepared for burial and placed in its splendid coffin her fame had already spread far through town and countryside. Vast was the crowd of mourners who, when her body was once more laid beside that of her husband, never to be disturbed again, flocked from distances of over a thousand *li* to show their admiration of the bravest of women and most faithful of wives.

With the exception of the last, all these little stories have been translated almost word for word from the official records of Weihaiwei and the three neighbouring districts. Similar cases could be collected by the thousand. Honorific portals and handsome marble monuments stand by the roadside in every

<sup>1</sup> In China the belief that inspires this practice is that the greater the number of mourners who throw handfuls of earth on the coffin, the greater will be the prosperity of the family in future and the more numerous its descendants. The custom is not, of course, confined to China. It is mentioned by Sir Thomas Browne as a practice of the Christians, "who thought it too little, if they threw not the earth thrice upon the interred body" (*Urn-Burial*, ch. iv.).

part of the Empire, silent witnesses to noble Chinese womanhood. There is not a district in China that does not possess its roll of women who have sacrificed their lives in obedience to what they believed to be the call of a sacred obligation. Probably none but the most bigoted or the most ignorant will read of these poor women—many of them hardly more than children—with feelings of either contempt or abhorrence. They died no doubt from a mistaken sense of duty: but to die for an idea that is based on error surely requires as much courage and resolution as to die for an idea that is radiant with truth, and—what is perhaps of greater practical significance—the women who go willingly to the grave for a cause that to us seems a poor one may be counted on to suffer as cheerfully and die as bravely for a cause that is truly great.

Brave women do not give birth to ignoble sons; and when we contemplate the present and speculate as to the future condition of China we may do well to remember that women like those of whom we have just read are among the mothers of the great race that constitutes perhaps more than a quarter of the world's population. The woman who offers herself as a willing sacrifice to-day on the altar of what may be called a domestic ideal is the mother of a man who may, to-morrow, offer himself with readiness and gladness on the altar of a political or a national ideal. In the marvellous evolution that has taken place during the past half-century in the island Empire of Japan one has hardly known which to admire most: the splendid daring and patriotism shown by the Japanese soldier and civilian or the patience and trustfulness shown in times of trial and hardship by the Japanese woman. China has surprises in store for us as startling as those that were given us by Japan; and not the least of these surprises, to many Western minds, will perhaps be the unflinching steadiness of the Chinese soldier on the field of battle when his regenerated country calls upon him to defend her from the spoiler, and the



heroism and fidelity of the Chinese woman at home. Europeans will doubtless wonder at what they take to be the sudden evolution of hitherto undreamed-of features in the Chinese character; yet those supposed new features will only be the ancestral qualities of loyalty and devotion directed into new channels broader and deeper than the old.

In spite of these considerations, most Western readers, whatever may be their views on the ethics of suicide, will probably confess themselves utterly unable to understand how a young betrothed girl can work herself into the state of intense emotional excitement which the act of self-destruction implies, merely as the result of the untimely death of the man to whom she happened to be engaged. The suicide of real widows, distracted with grief for the loss of a beloved husband, they can understand: but it cannot be love, and it can hardly be grief in the ordinary sense, that induces a Chinese girl to throw away her life when she hears of the decease of a young man with whom she has never exchanged a word and whose face perhaps she has never seen. It may be pointed out, in partial explanation of a phenomenon so strange to Western notions, that not only is a betrothal in China practically as binding as a marriage, but that marriage, and therefore the betrothal that precedes it, are according to Chinese belief founded on mysterious ante-natal causes. When the sceptical Englishman says jestingly that "marriages are made in heaven" he is giving expression to a theory that in China is held to be essentially true, though it is not expressed by the Chinese in exactly the same terms. The theory is independent of and perhaps older than Buddhism, though no doubt popular Buddhism has done a great deal to strengthen it; and it has certainly helped to keep the Chinese people satisfied with their traditional marriage customs, which, as every one knows, are quite independent of love-making. It is partly this theory that makes a Chinese woman contented and even

happy in the contemplation of her approaching marriage to an unknown bridegroom, and often fixes in a girl's mind the idea that to give herself to any man other than her first betrothed, even if the latter died during the betrothal, would be as shameful a proceeding as to commit an act of unfaithfulness in wedlock.

Probably it is only the fear of social disorder and many other practical inconveniences that have prevented the second betrothals and second marriages of women from being more severely discouraged by public opinion than is actually the case. The first are in ordinary practice passed over without comment, though the fact of the original betrothal is "hushed up," or is at least not talked of; the second are in many parts of China still regarded with austere disfavour, though circumstances such as extreme poverty may render them necessary. In any case, the girl who refuses a second betrothal is still honoured and respected just as if she were a widow who had virtuously refused a second marriage.

It should be noted that the discredit of a second marriage or the lesser discredit of contracting a second betrothal does not attach to the woman only. But a man is in practice more at liberty than a woman to consult his own inclinations. The young widower who refrains from a second marriage after his wife's death is regarded as deserving of the greatest praise and respect, but if he is childless he is in the dilemma of having to be either unfaithful to the memory of his wife or undutiful towards his parents and ancestors; and as the parents "count" more than the wife in China he must choose to be unfaithful rather than undutiful. It is an important part of Chinese teaching that the most unfilial of sons is he who has no children: the reason being, of course, that childlessness means the extinction of the family and the cessation of the ancestral sacrifices. Thus a childless widower not



only may, but must, seek a second marriage, especially if he has no married brothers. A common way out of the difficulty is for the widower to take a concubine: for the concubine's position in China is a perfectly legal one, and her children, as we have seen, are legitimate.

After all, it is perhaps impossible for any European mind to understand the real nature of the impulse that occasionally drives a Chinese girl to kill herself on the death of an unknown betrothed; not indeed because the occidental mind is essentially different from the oriental, but because of the unbridged chasm that lies between the social, religious and ethical systems and traditions of East and West. Considerations of this kind should perhaps teach us something of the limitations of our minds and characters, by showing how comparative a thing is our boasted independence of thought, and with what humiliating uniformity our ideals and impulses are conditioned by the social and traditional surroundings in which we live and move. However this may be, it will perhaps be comforting to know that the Chinese, unsentimental as they are in their methods of courtship, are no strangers to what in Europe we recognise as the romance of love.

As we saw in the last chapter, Chinese marriages, in spite of their supposed pre-natal origin, are not always productive of lifelong happiness; but as an offset to the melancholy picture there drawn of many domestic infelicities, it is only fair to emphasise the unruffled peace and contentment of very many Chinese households. In numerous cases this happy condition of affairs is the result of a real if somewhat undemonstrative love between husband and wife—a love that is perhaps all the more likely to be firm and lasting because it only sprang into existence after marriage. It is obviously difficult to cite instances of this. It is the unhappy marriages, not the happy ones, that in China—as everywhere else—engage the attention

of an administrator or a judge. But sometimes a suicide occurs in circumstances which indicate that the moving impulse can only have been deep grief for the death of a beloved wife or husband. I have had cause to investigate officially no less than three such cases within two months.

A man named Chang Chao-wan died after a short illness. A few hours later, at midnight, his wife, who had previously shown every sign of intense grief, hanged herself. It was ascertained that the couple had lived a happy married life for nearly forty years. He was fifty-eight years of age, she was fifty-seven. They had three sons, all grown-up. In a case like this the action of the woman cannot be attributed to a desire for notoriety or a hope of posthumous honours, for it is only young widows who have any reason to expect such rewards.

The second instance is perhaps of greater interest. The story may be stated in the words of the man who first reported it. "My second son, Ts'ung Chia-lan, went to Kuantung (Manchuria) a few months after his marriage. This was eight years ago. He went abroad because the family was poor and he wanted to make some money. His wife was very miserable when he went and begged him not to go, but he promised to come back to her. He disappeared, and for years we heard nothing of him. His wife made no complaint, but she was unhappy. A few months ago a returned emigrant told us that he had seen my son in Manchuria. When I saw that this news made his wife glad I sent my elder son, Chia-lin, to look for him and bring him home. My elder son was away for more than two months and never found him. Then he returned by himself and told us there was no hope of our ever seeing Chia-lan again. His wife heard him say this. We tried to console her. She said nothing at all, but two hours after my elder son had come home she took a dose of arsenic and died. She was a good woman, and no one ever



had a complaint to make against her. She had no child."

The last case to be mentioned shows that it is not women only who can throw away their lives on the death of their loved ones. A native of the village of Hai-hsi-t'ou came to report the suicide of a nephew, Tung Ch'i-tzŭ. "He was twenty years old," said my informant. "He was deeply attached to his wife and she to him. She died about six weeks ago. They had been married less than two years and they had no children. He was very unhappy after her death, and would not let any one console him. He was left alone, and yesterday when his father had gone to market he hanged himself from a beam with his own girdle. There was no other motive for the suicide. He died because he loved his wife too much, and could not live without her."

Deaths and suicides have made a dismal chapter, and perhaps no better way could be devised of lightening the gloom than by turning to a source of brightness that does more to make homes happy—Chinese homes and Western homes—than anything else in the world. To say that the Chinese love their children would be unnecessary: they would be a unique race if they did not. But it may not be accepted equally readily that Chinese girls and boys are charming and lovable even when compared with the modern children of western Europe and America, who have all the resources of science and civilisation lavished on their upbringing, and for whose benefit has been founded something like a special branch of psychology. Perhaps there has been no section of the Chinese people more hopelessly misunderstood by Western folk than the children. It is not unnatural that such should be the case. It is but rarely that feelings of real sympathy and mutual appreciation can exist between Chinese children and adult Europeans. It would be futile to deny the fact that by the Chinese child we are almost sure to be re-

garded as fearfully and wonderfully ugly—and all good children have an instinctive dislike of the ugly. Our clothing is ridiculous; our eyes and noses are deformed; our hair (unless it is black) looks diseased; our language—even if we profess to speak Chinese—is strangely uncouth; and the particular blandishments we attempt are not of the kind to which they are accustomed, or to which they know how to respond. There is no use in saying “goo-goo” to an infant that expects to be addressed with a conciliating “fo-fo”; nor should we be surprised if we fail to win the approval of a shy Chinese youngster by talking to him on the topics that would rouse the interest of the twentieth-century English schoolboy. As likely as not he will remain stolidly indifferent, and will stare at his well-meaning interlocutor with a disconcerting lack—or apparent lack—of intelligence. No wonder is it that the mortified foreigner often goes away complaining that Chinese children are ugly, stupid, horrid and ungracious little urchins and that he will never try to make friends with them again.

Even distance does not seem to lend much enchantment to the Chinese child from the European point of view. He is commonly caricatured somewhat after this fashion: he never smiles; he has hardly any nose and possesses oblique eyes that are almost invisible; he wears too many clothes in winter, so that he looks like an animated plum-pudding; he wears too little in summer—his birthday dress, to be explicit—and looks like a jointed wooden doll; he has a horror of “romping”; he is unwashed, deceitful and cruel; he cultivates a solemnity of demeanour with the view of leading people to think he is precociously wise and preternaturally good; and he is always mouthing philosophic saws from Confucius which he has learned by rote and of which he neither knows nor wants to know the meaning. Of course there is much in this description that is totally false



and misleading, but it is not difficult to see the superficial characteristics that may give such a caricature a certain amount of plausibility.

To form a true idea of what Chinese children really are we must take them unawares among their own people, if we are fortunate enough to have opportunities of doing so. We must go into the country fields and villages and see them at work and play; we must watch them at their daily round of duties and pleasures, at school (one of the old-fashioned schools if possible), in times of sickness and pain, on occasions of festivals, family gatherings, weddings and funerals. The more we see of them in their own houses and surrounded by their own relatives the better we shall understand them and the more we shall like them. They are highly intelligent, quick to see the merry side of things, brimful of healthy animal spirits, and exceedingly companionable. This applies not only to the boys but also in a smaller degree to the girls, who, however, are much less talkative than they come to be in later years and are apt to be more timid and shy than their little brothers. They are terribly handicapped by the cruel custom of foot-binding, which it is earnestly to be hoped will before long be utterly abolished throughout China. It has undoubtedly caused a far greater aggregate amount of pain and misery in China than has been produced by opium-smoking. In spite of the cruelty involved in foot-binding, the rather common impression that the Chinese have no affection for their daughters or regard the birth of a girl as a domestic calamity is very far from correct. That a son is welcomed with greater joy than a daughter is true, but that a daughter is not welcomed at all is a view which is daily contradicted by experience. Mothers, especially, are often as devoted to their girls as they are to their boys. In the autumn of 1909 a headman reported to me that a woman of his village had killed herself because she was distracted with grief on

account of the death of her child. The child in question was a girl, fourteen years of age. "Her mother," said the headman, "begged Heaven (*Lao T'ien-yeh*) to bring her daughter back to life, and she declared that she would willingly give her life in exchange for that of her daughter." It is erroneous to suppose that the old loving relations between mother and daughter are necessarily severed on the daughter's marriage. It is often the case that a young married woman's greatest happiness consists in periodical visits to her old home.

On the whole it may be said that Chinese children are neither better nor worse, neither more nor less delightful, than the children of the West, and that child-nature is much the same all the world over. Among their most conspicuous qualities are their good-humour and patience. Chinese children bear illness and pain like little heroes. This need not be ascribed entirely to the oft-asserted cause that "Chinese have no nerves," though indeed there is good reason to believe that the people of the West (perhaps owing to the relaxing effects of a pampering civilisation) are considerably more sensitive to physical suffering than the people of the Orient. Another interesting characteristic of Chinese children consists in the fact that good manners very often appear, at first sight, to be innate rather than acquired. Even illiterate children, and the children of illiterate parents, seem to behave with a politeness and grace of manner towards their elders and superiors (more particularly, of course, those of their own race) which they certainly have not learned by direct teaching. A well-bred European child sometimes gives one the impression that he has learned his exemplary "manners" as a lesson, just as he learns the tributaries of the Ouse or the dates of the kings. The most remarkable point about the Chinese child's "manners" is the grace and ease with which he displays them and the entire absence of *mauvaise*



*honte*. No doubt the truth of the matter is that courtesy is no more a natural quality in the Chinese than in other races. The average peasant's child in north China, who is always treated with what seems to us excessive indulgence—being allowed to run wild and hardly ever punished for his childish acts of “naughtiness” and disobedience—grows up a devoted and obedient son and most courteous and conciliatory, as a rule, in his dealings with the outside world; but these graces were not born in him except possibly in the merely potential form of hereditary predisposition. He has acquired them unconsciously through the medium of that “endless imitation” which, as Wordsworth said, seems at times to be the “whole vocation” of a healthy child. Doubtless he learns the forms of politeness to some extent from his schoolmaster—and indeed if ethical teaching can make a good boy, then the educated Chinese boy should be perfect; but that school teaching is not everything is proved by the fact that in a poor country-district like Weihaiwei, where only a small proportion of the children go to school, there is no essential difference in “manners” between the lettered and the ignorant, though the educated are of course quicker in intelligence and more adaptable.

Perhaps the explanation of the matter is that in China the adult's life and the child's life are not kept too far apart from each other, so that the child has endless opportunities of indulging his imitative faculties to the utmost. Children live in the bosom of the family, and it is very rarely indeed that their natural high spirits are frowned down with the chilling remark that “little boys should be seen and not heard.” Strange to say, the sparing of the rod does not seem to have the effect of spoiling the Chinese child, who is not more troublesome or unruly than the average European child. The Chinese, indeed, have a proverb which shows that they, too, understand the value of occasional corporal punishment:

"From the end of the rod pops forth a filial son." But the rod is allowed to become very dusty in most Chinese homes, and the filial son seems to come all the same.

Female infanticide is not practised in Weihaiwei. The only infants ever made away with are the offspring of illicit connections, and in such cases no difference is made between male and female. A young woman who has been seduced is—or was till recent years—practically compelled to destroy her illegitimate child; her own life would become insupportable otherwise, and she would probably be driven to suicide. The voice of the people would be unanimous against the Government if it caused the mother in such a case to be prosecuted on a charge of homicide, although her own female relations and neighbours often treat her so unmercifully as a result of her fall that she sometimes chooses to die by her own hand rather than submit to their ceaseless revilings.

Chinese law strongly supports the sanctity of the home and is very severe on unfaithful wives, but it regards the killing of an illegitimate child as a very light offence,—indeed case-made law regards it as no offence at all provided the killing be done at the time of the child's birth or before it. Fortunately cases of this kind in Weihaiwei are very rare. But the poorest classes have one most objectionable custom which seems to be strangely inconsistent with the undoubted fondness of parents for their children. This is the practice of throwing away or exposing the bodies of children who have died in infancy or in very early childhood. This seems to indicate an extraordinary degree of callousness in the natures of the people. How a mother can fondle her child lovingly and watch over it with the utmost care and unselfishness when it is sick, and yet can bear to see its little body thrown into an open ditch or left on a hillside to become the prey of wolves or the village dogs, is perhaps one of those mysterious anomalies in which



the Chinese character is said to abound. Even New Guinea babies are treated after death with more respect than is sometimes the case in China.<sup>1</sup> Needless to say the British Government has not remained inactive in the matter, and the man who now refrains from giving his infant child decent burial knows that he runs a risk of punishment.

The only excuses that can be made for the people in this respect are not based on their poverty (for poverty does not prevent them from burying their adult relatives with all proper decorum) but on their theory that an infant "does not count" in the scheme of family and ancestral relationships. No mourning of any kind is worn for children who die under the age of about eight, and only a minor degree of mourning for older children who die unmarried and unmarriedable. Even when a young child's body is given a place in the family burial-ground care is always taken to choose a grave-site that is not likely to be selected for the burial of any senior,<sup>2</sup> for it is considered foolish and unnecessary to waste good *fêng-shui* on a mere child, who has left no descendants whose fortunes it can influence.

Young children are not indeed regarded as soulless,<sup>3</sup> for there are touching ceremonies whereby a mother seeks to recall the soul of her child when it seems likely to fly away for ever; but child-spirits are not supposed to exercise any control over the welfare of the family. They never "grow up" in the spirit-world, but merely remain infant ghosts, powerful in nothing. The ancestral temples preserve no records of dead children nor are their names inscribed on spirit tablets. This is very different from the state of things existing among a race that

<sup>1</sup> See Grant Allen's *The Evolution of the Idea of God*, pp. 52 and 69.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 266.

<sup>3</sup> According to the Fijian Islanders the souls of the unmarried are soon extinguished in the Under-world. See Tylor's *Primitive Culture* (4th ed.), vol. ii. p. 23.

is ethnically far inferior to the Chinese, namely the Vaeddas of Ceylon, who pay special attention to "the shades of departed children, the 'infant spirits,'"<sup>1</sup> and often call upon them for aid in times of unhappiness or calamity.

Fortunately the average child in Weihaiwei is an exceedingly healthy little piece of humanity and is not in the habit of worrying about the ultimate fate of either his body or his soul. He derives pleasure from the knowledge that he is loved by his elders, and in his rather undemonstrative way he loves them in return. He lives on simple fare that European children would scorn, but it is only the poorest of the poor whose children cannot *ch'ih pao* (eat as much as they like) at least once a day. A villager in Weihaiwei who gave his children too little to eat would probably hear highly unflattering opinions about himself from his next-door neighbours, and to "save his face" he would be obliged to show less parsimony in matters of diet. That under-feeding cannot be common in Weihaiwei except in times of actual famine is proved not only by the excellent health and spirits of the children but by the fine physical development of the adults and the great age often attained by them.

We are told by many observers that theory and practice in China are often widely divergent, but in one matter at least they absolutely coincide. The Chinese hold that the greatest treasure their country can possess consists not in gold and silver, mines and railways, factories and shipping, but in an ever-increasing army of healthy boys and girls—the future fathers and mothers of the race. If the family decays the State decays; if the family prospers the State prospers: for what is the State but a vast aggregate of families? What indeed is the Emperor himself but the Father of the State and thus the Patriarch of every family within it? This is the Chinese theory,

<sup>1</sup> Tylor, *op cit*, vol. ii. p. 117.





AN AFTERNOON SIESTA (see p. 252).

p. 252]



WASHING CLOTHES (see p. 207).





and there is hardly a man in China who does not do his best to prove by practical demonstration that the theory is a correct one. "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord," sings the Psalmist; "Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them." The average Chinese peasant must be a very happy man.

## CHAPTER XI

### FAMILY GRAVEYARDS

NOR the most unobservant visitor to China can fail to notice the ubiquity of graveyards. In Western countries one is usually obliged to ask the way to a cemetery; in China one finds the way by merely walking in any direction one pleases. Nowhere so vividly as in China does one realise that not only the path of glory but every other kind of path leads but to a grave. The sight is sometimes a melancholy one; as dreary as some of the city churchyards in England are the vast cemeteries for the poor that cover the bare hillsides in the neighbourhood of many great Chinese cities. The omega-shaped tombs of south China are apt, moreover, to appal one by their vastness and too often by the barren cheerlessness of their surroundings. But there is nothing dismal in the family graveyards that dot the valleys of the country districts in the north. Indeed, in a region like the north-eastern extremity of Shantung, where there is of course no tropical vegetation and where timber is scarce, the wooded graveyards form one of the pleasantest features in every landscape. If while walking across the fields of the Weihaiwei Territory one comes across a thick plantation of trees—such as the fir and the Chinese oak, which is never leafless—one is sure to find that it marks the last resting-place of a family or a clan that inhabits or once inhabited some village not far away. The plantation is



surrounded by no wall or fence of any kind; such would be a useless precaution, for no one—except an occasional rascal who “fears neither God nor man”—will knowingly injure a funereal tree or otherwise violate the sanctity of the home of the dead. At the first glance the tombs may not be visible, for the tree branches are almost interlaced, and in summer-time nearly every grave has its own canopy of foliage; moreover, instead of the omega or horse-shoe tombs of the south we find only little hillocks and unpretentious gravestones.

A Chinese grave in Weihaiwei is not indeed very different in appearance—looked at from afar—from a grave in Europe; though instead of the long mound in front of an inscribed stone we find in Weihaiwei a circular or sometimes oval-shaped mound *behind* the stone, which is an upright whitish block with very little ornamentation. The inscription usually contains nothing more (in modern times) than names and dates and position in the family. The names of husband and wife are inscribed on the same stone—for the two are always buried in the same grave, the wife's coffin being placed on the right of the husband's.<sup>1</sup> On the stone are frequently carved the names of the surviving members of the family by whom it has been erected. These are always persons in the direct line of descent; or, if the deceased left no heirs of his body, his adopted son. The translation of a typical inscription will be found on the next page.

It is not customary to erect a tombstone soon after a burial; the mound is sufficient to indicate to the family the exact position of the grave, and all necessary dates and names are carefully entered on the pedigree-scroll or inscribed on the ancestral tablets. In front of each grave will often be seen a small stone altar or pedestal or a stone incense-jar. Here are offered up the ancestral sacrifices at the festivals of Ch'ing-Ming

<sup>1</sup> That is to say, the wife's body lies at the right side of the husband's; thus the husband, as head of the family, is given the left side—the place of honour.

and the first of the tenth moon.<sup>1</sup> At one extremity of the graveyard will often be found a large upright stone slab on which is engraved in deep bold characters the name of the family to which all the tombs belong. The inscription is as simple as possible, usually con-

THE IMPERIAL CH'ING DYNASTY

THE TOMB

OF

A MEMBER OF THE YAO FAMILY, AN ELDEST  
SON, WHOSE PERSONAL NAME WAS

SHIH-JUN

AND OF

HIS WIFE

A DAUGHTER OF THE WANG FAMILY

This stone is erected on the twelfth day of the second month of the first year of Hsüan T'ung (March 3, 1909) by Yao Fêng-lai, a son, Yao Yüeh-i, a grandson, and Yao Wan-nien, a great-grandson

sisting of four Chinese characters. *Chou Shih Tsu Ying*<sup>2</sup>—to take an example—may be rendered

THE ANCESTRAL GRAVEYARD OF THE CHOU FAMILY

Most of the graveyards (*ying ti*) are very old, and as the centuries pass, the inscriptions on the oldest monuments naturally tend to become illegible or the stones themselves are displaced and broken by the roots of

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 186-7, 192.

<sup>2</sup> See illustration.





THE ANCESTRAL GRAVEYARD OF THE CHOU FAMILY.





trees or other natural causes. At the periodical sacrifices, however, care is taken to neglect no grave that is recognisable as such. In order to make sure that none of the ancestral spirits will be left uncared for, sacrificial offerings are made to the souls of the ancestors in general as well as to the immediate predecessors of the sacrificers. The usual expression used in Weihaiwei for a ceremonial visit to the family grave is *shang fên*, "to go up to the tombs."<sup>1</sup>

A graveyard is very often completely surrounded by cultivated fields. As a general rule these fields are the property of a branch of the family that owns the graveyard, but sometimes the family has emigrated to another part of the country or has had to part with this portion of its arable acres, so that it has passed into the hands of strangers. But the graveyard itself is never forgotten and never alienated. No matter to what distance the family may have moved, it will never lose touch with the spot where lie the bones of its ancestors—the spot to which its members all expect that their bodies will some day be carried. Year by year one or more members of the family will be sent to carry out the traditional sacrificial ceremonies, to "sweep" the tombs and to see that the ploughs of strangers have not encroached upon the sacred boundaries.

The most interesting tombs in Weihaiwei, from the visitor's point of view, are those known to the English as Beehive graves.<sup>2</sup> All or nearly all those on which the inscriptions are legible show that they were erected in the Yüan dynasty (1280–1367) or the early Ming dynasty, which came to the throne in 1368. None are of modern date, though in many cases the

<sup>1</sup> Expressions such as *pai sao* (the extended meaning of which is "to make obeisance to the ancestral spirits and to sweep the tombs") are also well known. In southern China (*e.g.* at Canton) perhaps the commonest term is *pai shan*, "to worship (at) the hills"—where in that part of the Empire the majority of the graves are situated.

<sup>2</sup> See illustration.

places in which they are found are still the family burial-grounds of the direct descendants of the people to whose memory they were erected. This handsome form of tombstone has fallen into complete disuse, and the people account for its former use by the explanation that in the old days the country was overrun with wolves and other wild beasts and that it was necessary to erect massive piles of masonry over the graves to protect them from desecration. These tombs somewhat resemble Buddhist stupas or Lamaist *chorten*; most of them have panels artistically carved with figures of animals, human beings and conventional plants and devices of various kinds. Very often the carving on a panel represents the tomb itself in miniature, with mourners or worshippers kneeling round it. The whole structure is made of heavy blocks of stone, the general design consisting of a large dome surmounted by a Buddhistic lotus or a conventional spire and superimposed upon a panelled pedestal.

Every graveyard is "managed" by the elders of the clan, who draw up rules for general upkeep and the allotment of grave-sites. Sometimes the different branches of the family are allowed to take turns in keeping the graveyard in proper order and in superintending the sacrifices, in return for which services the caretakers are allowed to derive a little profit from a periodical grass-cutting and pruning of trees; sometimes, too, they are put in temporary and conditional possession of an area of arable land out of the proceeds of which they are often expected not only to look after the graveyard but also to keep in repair the *chia miao* or Family Temple. Acrimonious disputes occasionally arise among relatives as to who has the best right or whose turn has arrived to enjoy the use of these "sacrificial" lands, and sometimes a whole clan brings an action against one of its branches for refusing to give them up when it has had its turn. But after all, though such disputes provide troublesome work for the British magistrate whose duty it is



to administer "local custom," the system as a general rule works very smoothly.

In dealing with village life we saw that most villages have their police regulations,<sup>1</sup> in accordance with which they impose fines on those who have been guilty of misconduct. Special regulations are often considered necessary for the adequate protection of the family graveyards. One set of such is now before me, and runs as follows :

"The following list of penalties for offences connected with the ancestral graveyard is drawn up and unanimously agreed upon by the entire village of the Tsou family :

Cutting or mutilating trees without authority . . . . .	10 <i>tiao</i> .
Cutting grass or shrubs . . . . .	5 <i>tiao</i> .
Pasturing cattle, donkeys or mules . . . . .	5 <i>tiao</i> .

"This list of penalties is to be preserved in the Ancestral Temple of the Tsou family."

It will be observed that no penalty is assigned for the offence of damaging the actual graves, this being an offence which is almost unknown; though a man was once charged before me by the whole of his fellow-villagers with the offence of digging up and levelling an old grave (*chiieh p'ing ku fên*). It was admitted by the prosecutors that the grave in question was very ancient and that the branch of the family to which it belonged had long been extinct. The fact that the whole village made a point of denouncing their sacrilegious neighbour (who had hoped to extend the boundaries of his arable land by encroaching on a corner of the graveyard that no one seemed to want) shows how heinous a crime it is in China to disturb the resting-places even of the unknown dead. Sometimes the regulations are cut on a great stone slab which

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 160 *seq.*

is set up within the graveyard itself. If no definite regulations have been agreed upon, the custom, when the sanctity of a graveyard has been violated, is for the elders of the clan to meet in council and decide the case according to circumstances. If the convicted man refuses to accept the punishment pronounced upon him, or if he belongs to another village or clan, the matter usually comes before the magistrate.

A case arising out of the theft of some graveyard trees was lately submitted to my decision owing to the truculent behaviour of the malefactor, who refused to submit to the headmen's judgment. After investigating the circumstances I sentenced him to pay a fine of ten dollars, which was to be applied to the upkeep of the ancestral temple; to plant three times the number of trees that he had cut down; and to erect a stone tablet within the graveyard at his own expense setting forth the offence of which he had been guilty and enlarging upon the severe punishments that would befall others who attempted in future to commit like misdeeds.

Another case was brought before me by a man who accused a stranger of cutting up a dead donkey within his family graveyard. The defendant's excuse was that while passing the graveyard his donkey had suddenly taken ill and died, and that he dragged it in among the trees in order to avoid incommoding the public by skinning and slicing the animal on the roadside. Donkeys, it may be mentioned, are not ordinary articles of diet, but few Chinese can bring themselves to throw away flesh that by any stretch of the imagination can be regarded as edible; hence it is quite usual to eat the remains of cattle and donkeys that die of old age or even of disease. The plaintiff's plea in this suit was not that the defendant was preparing for human consumption food that was unfit to eat, but that the defendant had selected his graveyard for use as a butcher's shop. He objected, reasonably enough, to having his ancestors' tombs bespattered



with the blood of a dead donkey. The defendant was required to offer a public apology to the plaintiff and to pay him a moderate sum as compensation ; and the plaintiff left the court a contented man.

The mode of punishment often chosen by the elders for offences connected with graveyards is to compel the accused to make an expiatory offering to the dead whose spirits he is supposed to have offended. A man who "cut branches from the family graveyard for his own use" was recently sentenced by his clan to present himself at the graveyard in an attitude of humility and to offer up a sacrifice of pork and vegetables. The custom in such cases is that after the dead have consumed their part of the sacrifice (that is to say, the spiritual or immaterial and invisible part) the remainder is divided up among the chief families concerned or eaten at a clan feast.

A curious custom analogous to this of serving up hog-flesh as an expiatory offering to the spirits to whom the graveyard and its trees are sacred is to be found in Roman literature. "Cato," as Dr. Tylor reminds us,<sup>1</sup> "instructs the woodman how to gain indemnity for thinning a holy grove; he must offer a hog in sacrifice with this prayer, 'Be thou god or goddess to whom this grove is sacred, permit me, by the expiation of this pig, and in order to restrain the overgrowth of this wood, *etc., etc.*'" The two customs are not true parallels, however, for the Chinese offers his sacrifice to the spirits of his ancestors as an atonement for the offence of cutting trees which he normally regards as the inviolable property of the dead or as associated with them in some mysterious way; whereas the Roman offered his sacrifice to a grove which was in itself sacred as being the abode of gods or dryads. We shall see later on<sup>2</sup> that tree-worship still finds a place in the Chinese religious system and is not

<sup>1</sup> *Primitive Culture* (4th ed.), vol. ii. p. 227. Dr. Tylor quotes from Cato, *De Re Rustica*, 139; Pliny, xvii. 47.

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 382 *seq.*

extinct even in Weihaiwei, but it would be a mistake to regard the veneration shown for the trees of a family graveyard as evidence of such worship. Even if the custom of planting a graveyard with trees had in remote times a common origin with tree-worship (which is at least doubtful) there is no evidence whatever to support the view that graveyard trees are regarded as sacred in themselves at the present time. An obvious reason for planting trees in a graveyard would seem to be that it facilitated the protection of the graves from the encroachments of the plough; but the custom is more probably derived from the ancient superstition that certain trees communicate their preservative qualities to the human remains that lie below them or impart a kind of vitality or vigour to the spirits of the dead.

This matter has been ably and thoroughly discussed by Dr. De Groot,<sup>1</sup> who shows convincingly that "since very ancient times pines and cypresses have played a prominent part as producers of timber for coffins, and that this was the case because these trees, being believed to be imbued with great vitality, might counteract the putrefaction of the mortal remains." The same cause that made such timber valuable for coffins made it valuable for graveyards. The superstition is connected with the ancient Chinese philosophic doctrine of the *Yang* and the *Yin*—the complementary forces and qualities which pervade all nature, such as male and female, light and dark, warmth and cold, activity and passivity, positive and negative, life and death. It was supposed that all

<sup>1</sup> *The Religious System of China*, vol. ii. pp. 462 *seq.* See also vol. i. pp. 294 *seq.*, and p. 348, where Dr. De Groot mentions "the conception that if a body is properly circumvested by objects and wood imbued with *Yang* matter, or, in other words, with the same *shên* afflatus of which the soul is composed, it will be a seat for the manes even after death, a support to which the manes may firmly adhere and thus prevent their nebulous, shadowy being from evaporating and suffering annihilation."



evergreens must have a greater store of the *yang* element (life, vitality) than other trees, because they retain their foliage through the winter; and of evergreen trees those prized most by the Chinese for their life-giving qualities were and are the fir and the cypress.<sup>1</sup> Therefore by planting these trees in their graveyards and in the courtyards of their ancestral temples the Chinese supposed they would endow their ancestors (apparently both their dead bodies and their living spirits) with a never-failing preservative against decay and dissolution. The result of this on themselves—the living descendants of the dead—must be, it was thought, a constant flow of happiness and good fortune.

It will be remembered that ancestor-worship is not merely regarded as a method of showing love and reverence for the dead but is believed to induce the ancestral spirits to protect and watch over the family and to bestow on its members long life, many children and general prosperity. The more abundant the vitality (if one may speak of the vitality of a ghost) that can be imparted to the ancestral spirits, the better able will they be (so goes the theory) to exert themselves on behalf of the fortunes of their posterity; and the best way to impart vitality (that is, the *yang* element) to the spirits is to surround their coffins and their ancestral tablets with as many *yang*-supplying agencies as possible. The original theory of the matter is probably extinct at Weihaiwei if not everywhere else; trees are planted and protected in the family temples and graveyards for no known reason except that it is the traditional custom to do

<sup>1</sup> "The ancient Chinese, as well as Pliny, must have observed that *pinus et cupressus adversum cariem tineasque firmissimae*. (Hist. Nat. xvi.) These trees being in fact more proof against the ravages of air, weather and insects than perhaps any other growing on the soil of the Empire, it is natural enough that the inhabitants thereof ascribed their strong constitution to the large amount of vital power in their wood."—DE GROOT, *Religious System of China*, vol. i. p. 295.

so<sup>1</sup>: yet it is noteworthy that the cypress is still the favourite tree in the grounds of the ancestral temples, that the fir is still considered one of the best trees to plant in a graveyard, and that the pedigree-scrolls preserved among the archives of every family are often decorated with the painting of an ever-green tree.<sup>2</sup>

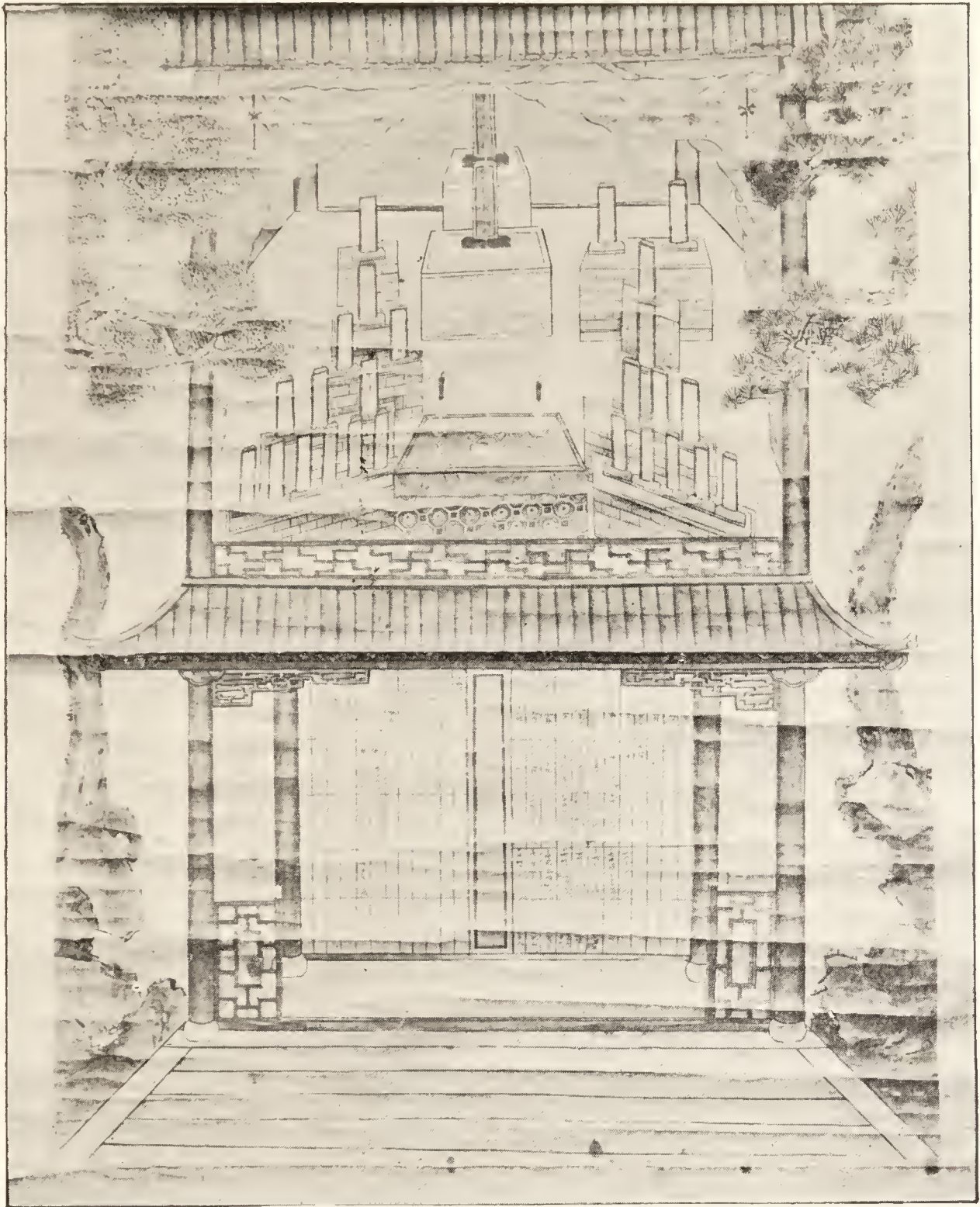
There are still persons in the Territory of Weihaiwei and its neighbourhood who call themselves *yin-yang hsien-shêng*, that is, professors of the principles of *yin* and *yang*. Their functions are much the same as those of the *fêng-shui hsien-shêng* or Masters in Geomancy.<sup>3</sup> As professional attendants at funerals their business is to see that all the arrangements are so carried out as to give every chance for the "vital essences" (*yang*) to assert themselves and to keep the dark and languid essences (*yin*) in their

<sup>1</sup> In ancient Egypt the cemeteries were overshadowed by thick sycamores; and probably in nearly every country the planting of trees and shrubs (or flowering plants) on the graves of the dead is or has been a common practice. There is no necessity to ascribe the custom to a single origin. The mere desire to differentiate the grave from the surrounding tract of land is sufficient to explain the planting of a tree or a grove of trees on or near the funeral mound. The cypress, as every one knows, was and is a funereal tree in Europe as well as in China. That this was so in Roman times we know from classical literature. For some remarks on the cypress in connection with European folk-lore, see the *Folk-lore Journal*, vol. iii. (1885) p. 144. See also Sir Thomas Browne's *Urn-Burial*, ch. iv. para. 3, where it is remarked "that, in strewing their tombs, the Romans affected the rose; the Greeks, amaranthus and myrtle: that the funeral pyre consisted of sweet fuel, cypress, fir, larix, yew and trees perpetually verdant." He adds that these flowers and trees were intended to be silent expressions of the hopes of the survivors; and that "Christians, who deck their coffins with bays, have found a more elegant emblem; for that tree, seeming dead, will restore itself from the root, and its dry and exsuccous leaves resume their verdure again; which, if we mistake not, we have also observed in furze. Whether the planting of yew in churchyards hold not its original from ancient funeral rites, or as an emblem of resurrection, from its perpetual verdure, may also admit conjecture."

<sup>2</sup> See illustration.

<sup>3</sup> See pp. 118 *seq.*





A PEDIGREE-SCROLL (CHIA P'U).





proper position of subordination. They select the propitious moment for starting the procession, for lowering the coffin into the grave and for every other act of importance in connection with the funeral; to them also is left—within limits—the selection of a favourable position for the grave.<sup>1</sup> The rules of *fêng-shui* are complicated in the extreme; an error of a few feet in judging of the precisely favourable spot may completely shut off all the *yang* influences and let in all the *yin* influences with a rush, in which case—so it is supposed by believers—the family is doomed to misfortune and will probably before long become extinct.

A southern aspect is supposed to be generally the most favourable for a graveyard, for the south is *yang* whereas the north is *yin*; but other influences and conditions have to be taken into account as well—such as the contour of the neighbouring hills, the direction of valleys and streams, the proximity of human habitations, and many other things: so that a graveyard that has a northern aspect but possesses first-rate geomantic conditions in other respects is often far superior from the point of view of the professors of *yin-yang* and *fêng-shui* to a graveyard that has a southern aspect but happens to be overlooked by a badly-shaped hill or is near a river that has too many bends or flows the wrong way. Within the graveyard itself the good influences are not supposed to concentrate themselves solely and permanently on one spot; if that were so, the first people to die after the selection of the graveyard would obviously get all the best positions.

The date and hour of death, the date of intended burial, the age and sex and star-influences of the deceased, and many variable local and temporary circumstances all have to be taken into consideration

<sup>1</sup> The services of these persons is by no means always considered necessary in Weihaiwei. Faith in the "science" of *fêng-shui* is much less strong here than in many other parts of the Empire.

before the *hsien-shêng* can advise his client as to the best possible site for any required grave. Certain parts of the graveyard are always more "honourable" (in the heraldic sense) than others from the point of view of family precedence and seniority. The back, centre and front portions of the ground are reserved for married couples who have left children and therefore take an honoured place in the family pedigree, whereas members of the family who have died unmarried or in childhood are either not accommodated in the family graveyard at all, or, if admitted, they are buried close to the right or the left boundary. A villager was once brought before me on the charge of having buried his dead infant, a child of two years old, in a part of the graveyard that was reserved for its dignified elders. As it is advisable in such matters to uphold local custom I felt reluctantly obliged to order the man to remove his child's body to that part of the graveyard which is regarded as appropriate for those who have died in infancy.

If a family has had a long run of misfortune or misery and sees no way of extricating itself from its difficulties, it will sometimes try to throw the blame on its graveyard: not, of course, on the spirits of its ancestors but merely on the unpropitious influences that hang round the sites of the family tombs. The only possible remedy in such a case is to employ a *hsien-shêng* to study the geomantic conditions of the locality and advise as to what can be done to improve them. He is almost sure to agree with his employers that their surmise is correct and that the badly-situated graveyard is the cause of all their woes, for he will then be able to proceed to the lucrative task of selecting a new graveyard-site and superintending the removal of the graves. The only case of this nature that has come within my personal experience is interesting as throwing a light on the *hsien-shêng's* method of work. It is probable that many other cases



have occurred even in Weihaiwei, but as geomantic superstitions are frowned upon by Chinese law, and the unnecessary removal of graves on the plea of finding better *fêng-shui* is a penal offence, *yin-yang* professors naturally ply their trade with as little ostentation as possible.

A man whom we will call Chang Ying-mu brought an action against some of his neighbours for denying him the right to move certain of his ancestors' graves from their present unlucky site to one that had been specially selected for him after deep consideration by a professor of *yin-yang* and *fêng-shui*. "I have been very unfortunate in business," he said; "I dealt in opium at Chefoo and used to get on very well; but this new anti-opium fad has ruined me. I came home recently and brought with me a *hsien-shêng* who is a native of Fu-shan Hsien [the magisterial district in which Chefoo is situated] in order to consult him about my ancestral graves, as I had suspicions that it was due to the bad *fêng-shui* of the graveyard that I had been landed in so many difficulties. The *hsien-shêng* saw at once that the present site was very bad. He said that nothing could be done to improve the *fêng-shui* and that I must move all the graves to another place. The spot he has chosen happens to be not far from the houses of Tsou Hêng-li and Tsou Yü-ch'êng and many other villagers; and they at once raised objections to the proposed site on the ground that they would see the graves on coming out of their houses, which they said would be unlucky. I suggested planting a row of trees between their houses and my graves, but they refused to accept this arrangement. I then offered to build a stone wall as a screen, and to write 'Happiness' and 'Long Life' in large characters on the side of it that would face the defendants' houses, but the *hsien-shêng* objects to this as the wall would obstruct the free circulation of good *fêng-shui* round my new graves. I have already acquired the new site by exchanging another

piece of land for it, and now that I have got it my neighbours prevent me from using it."

The defendants Tsou Hêng-li and others presented a counter-petition to the following effect. "The *hsien-shêng*, whose name is said to be Hsiao, is a stranger to our village and he is quite evidently a rascal. He falsely pretended to be skilled in *fêng-shui* in order to swindle Chang Ying-mu out of his money. He told Chang that if he moved his ancestral graves to the new site indicated he would guarantee that Chang would acquire wealth and honours within the space of three years. We all raised the strongest objections to the proposal, partly because Hsiao was a rogue and partly because the new site was practically in the middle of the village, which is quite an improper place for graves. The luck of our village would certainly be damaged if part of it were turned into a graveyard. Hsiao's only reply to us was that he was learned in the P'ing-yang books of Chiang-nan and that we were children in such deep matters. We fail to see why the customs of the Chiang-nan provinces should be made applicable to our province of Shantung. We appeal to the Magistrate to rid us of this pestilent fellow and so allow our village to resume its normal life."

Hsiao himself, who was duly summoned to explain his own view of the situation, stated that he had selected the site because he saw from the situation that it would be productive of long life and honours and that if the coffins remained where they were Chang Ying-mu's family would in future have bad luck, no honours and short lives. "My knowledge," he added on cross-examination, "is not derived from books but from the traditions of Chiang-nan." As I was anxious to obtain for my own information some clue to his methods and theories I called upon him to produce a clear statement on the subject in writing; and having had him conveyed from the court in charge of the police, I reprimanded Chang Ying-mu



for allowing himself to be deceived by a swindler and recommended him to leave his ancestors' graves where they were. I explained to him that the anti-opium regulations had been put in force in both British and Chinese territory quite irrespectively of his family concerns or his trading enterprises, and that they would unquestionably remain in force even if he moved his ancestral coffins a dozen times. The defendants were assured that in view of their very reasonable objections the court would certainly not allow their village to be turned into a graveyard.

As far as plaintiff and defendant were concerned the case was now at an end, but I had still to receive the professor's written statement. In a couple of days the document was duly presented, and may be translated thus:

"Statement showing cause why Chang Ying-mu's graveyard is unpropitiously situated and will cause misfortunes and early deaths; and why the site now selected will be the source of a constant flow of happiness. As regards the present site: firstly, all along the front of the graveyard there is a gully as deep as the height of two men. This is unlucky. The deep gully presses against the tombs like a wall, obstructing the passage of benign influences. This has a disastrous effect on the women of the family, who will have excessive difficulty in childbirth. Secondly, a small stream of water trickles from the graveyard and after flowing a distance of half a *li* it vanishes in the sand. The result of this on the family is that children are born as weaklings and die in infancy. Thirdly, another stream of water flows away to the north-east. This carries off all the wealth-making capabilities of the family and the good qualities of sons and grandsons. As regards the proposed new site: firstly, there are hills on the south-west, their direction being from east to west. Their formation so controls the courses of four streams that they all unite at the eastern corner of this site. Just as these streams of water come together and cannot again separate, so will riches and honours flow from various quarters

and finally unite in the hands of the family that has its graveyard in this fortunate locality. Secondly, the ceaseless flow of water has formed a long sandbank, four feet high, on the southern and south-eastern sides of the site. Just as the water brings down innumerable grains of sand and piles them up near the point where the waters meet, so will the family that buries its dead here be blessed with countless male descendants."

*Fêng-shui* is not a branch of knowledge that deserves encouragement, so I informed the professor that the explanations given in this illuminating document were interesting but unconvincing, and that if he did not withdraw from British territory within three days he would be sent to gaol as a rogue and vagabond. He forthwith returned to his native district and the graveyard of the Chang family remained undisturbed.

An incident of this kind affords proof, if such were necessary, that in keeping up the cult of ancestors and in devoting care and expense to the maintenance of the family tombs the Chinese are not actuated solely by feelings of filial piety and reverence for the dead. On the other hand it is equally clear from abundant evidence that self-interest and a desire for material prosperity are very far from being the sole source of ancestral worship. Some foreign critics have tried to show that it springs not from love and filial piety but from a dread of the ancestral spirits and a desire to propitiate them. This view, which has been condemned as erroneous by those who are themselves ancestor-worshippers, is certainly a mistaken one. If, indeed, the average ancestor-worshipping Chinese did not suppose that some material benefit would accrue to him from carrying out the prescribed rites he would doubtless show a flagging zeal in their perpetuation. Even the average European, perhaps, would grow a little weary of well-doing if he were informed on unimpeachable authority that in future the promised rewards of virtuous conduct were to be



withheld both on earth and in heaven and that a crown of glory was not for him. The average man, all the world over, is apt to show impatience if he is asked to be virtuous for the sole sake of virtue. Had the ancestral cult been founded on nothing but pure love, reverence and altruism, it might have been kept barely alive from generation to generation by a few of those rare and exalted souls who seem incapable of self-seeking, but it would never have attained universal observance throughout China; had it, on the other hand, been founded on nothing but fear, selfishness and desire for material gain, it might have become popular with the masses but it could never have earned, as it has earned, the enthusiastic approval of the noblest minds and loftiest characters that China has produced. Probably it is the very mingling of motives that has caused the cult of ancestors to take such deep root in the hearts of the people that it is to-day by far the most potent religious and social force to be found in the Empire.

At the present day and for very many centuries past the cult of ancestors and the dutiful upkeep of the ancestral tombs have been regarded as inseparably combined: but it was not so always. If the ancient Book of Rites (*Li Chi*) is to be trusted, Confucius for many years of adult life did not know where his father's grave was, and apparently it was only on his mother's death that he took the trouble to find out. The same book, which dates from the first and second centuries B.C., also narrates a story of how Confucius's disciples reported to him that the tumulus over his mother's grave had collapsed owing to a heavy rain-fall; yet he merely remarked, with emotion, that "people did not repair tombs in the good old times,"—an enigmatical remark that has been variously interpreted.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Legge's *Li-ki*, vol. i. p. 123; De Groot, *Religious System of China*, vol. ii. pp. 663-4 and 689; and Wang Ch'ung's *Lun Hêng*, transl. by Prof. A. Forke, Part i. p. 197.

These stories probably originated from the well-ascertained fact that Confucius—like most of the Chinese philosophers and sages—was very strongly opposed to lavish expenditure on coffins, graves and funerals. Confucius's teaching on the subject seems to have been practical and reasonable. He taught that the bodies of the dead should be treated with every possible respect but that the material interests of the living must not be sacrificed in order to confer some unnecessary and doubtful boon upon the dead. Needless to say he was strenuously opposed to the barbarous customs of entombing the living with the dead and of widow-immolation, customs which seem to have been practised in China from the seventh century B.C. if not from much earlier times and which did not become altogether extinct till the seventeenth century of our era.<sup>1</sup>

But if Confucius did not lay overmuch stress on funerals and the preservation of tombs, he was emphatic on the subject of filial piety. The connection between Confucianism and ancestral worship must be dealt with when we are considering the subject of Religion: it is therefore unnecessary to enlarge upon this important subject at present, beyond pointing out that filial piety—on which ancestral worship is based—was regarded by Confucius and his school as “the fountain from which all other virtues spring and the starting-point of all education.”<sup>2</sup>

There is a well-known Chinese tract called the “Twenty-four Examples of Filial Piety”<sup>3</sup> which consists of short anecdotes of sons who made themselves illustrious by the exercise of this chief of virtues. Some of the examples recorded are worthy of sincere admiration, but many of the filial performances are

<sup>1</sup> See De Groot, *op. cit.* vol. ii. pp. 720 *seq.*

<sup>2</sup> The *Hsiao Ching* (Classic of Filial Piety), chap. i.

<sup>3</sup> A translation of it by Mr. Ivan Chên may be found in the “Wisdom of the East” series (John Murray: 1908).



apt to strike an occidental reader as somewhat ridiculous. There is the famous story of Lao Lai-tzū, for instance, whose parents lived to such extreme old age that he was himself a toothless old man while they were both still alive. Conceiving it his duty to divert their attention from their weight of years and approaching end, he dressed himself up in the clothes of a child and danced and played about in his parents' presence with the object of making them think they were still a young married couple contemplating the innocent gambols of their infant son. Perhaps the most touching of these stories is that of Wang P'ou, whose mother happened to have an unconquerable dread of thunder and lightning. When she died she was buried in a mountain forest; and thereafter, when a violent thunderstorm occurred, Wang P'ou, heedless of the wind and rain, would hurry to her grave and throw himself to his knees. "I am here to protect you, dear mother," he would say; "do not be afraid."

If the stories in this well-known collection strike one as chiefly remarkable for their quaintness and simplicity, it should be remembered that they were primarily intended for the edification of the young, who might fail to understand the nobler modes in which filial piety can display itself. How numerous are the recorded examples of this virtue in China and how highly it is esteemed may be realised from the fact that a special chapter in the official Annals of every magisterial district is devoted to a summary of the most conspicuous local instances of filial piety that have come under the notice of the authorities. The official accounts of Weihaiwei and the neighbouring districts are not exceptional in this respect. This corner of the Empire may have produced few great scholars but it is certainly not without its roll of filial sons. The finest example from an occidental point of view is perhaps that of Huang Chao-hsüan, the brave boy who went out willingly to die by his

father's side.<sup>1</sup> Most of the other cases are of a type that appeals but slightly to the Western mind.

Of Wang Yen-ming, a Weihaiwei man, we are told that he lived in a hut beside his parents' grave for three years. This was quite a common practice in the old days;<sup>2</sup> the most famous example in history is that of Confucius's disciple Tzū Kung, who lived by the side of the Master's grave at Ch'ü Fou for no less than six years.<sup>3</sup> But even this act of devotion was outdone by a man named Tung Tao-ming of the Sung dynasty, who is said to have caused himself to be buried alive for three days in his mother's grave. The story goes that when his family dug him out at the end of that period they found him still alive and quite well; and he proceeded to build himself beside the grave a mat-shed in which he spent the rest of his life.<sup>4</sup> To return to the Weihaiwei story about Wang Yen-ming, it goes on to say that he mourned so much for his parents that he wept himself blind. However, a kind spirit visited him in a dream and rubbed his eyes with the juice or resin of a fir-tree, and this immediately restored his sight. It will be understood from what has been said with regard to firs and other evergreens<sup>5</sup> that owing to the abundance of the *yang* or vital element which they contain they are supposed to have marvellous healing as well as preservative qualities. For this reason the resin of such trees was believed to be one of the most valuable ingredients in the Taoists' elixir of life.

The story of Wang concludes with the remark that his descendants became highly successful and attained exalted office: this, of course, as a result of his filial piety, which is always supposed to bring its reward

<sup>1</sup> See p. 75.

<sup>2</sup> See De Groot's *Religious System of China*, vol. ii. pp. 794 *seq.*

<sup>3</sup> A little shrine by the side of Confucius's grave now occupies the site of Tzū Kung's hut.

<sup>4</sup> De Groot, *op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 732.

<sup>5</sup> See pp. 262 *seq.*



sooner or later. Of Ch'ên Kuo-hsiang, another local worthy, we are informed that he belonged to a family that was poor in material wealth but rich in virtue. His father when very old lost all his teeth and could not eat bean-porridge ; moreover, as he had a chronic cough he could not eat salt. For these reasons Ch'ên never allowed either beans or salt to appear on the family dinner-table so long as his father lived. This act of filial piety may have had two motives: in the first place, if these delicacies were on the table the old man might be tempted to taste them, and this might result in his illness and death: in the second place, if he were persuaded to refrain from eating them his venerable heart might vex itself with the reflection that he was getting old and feeble and could not eat the same things as other people. Whatever Ch'ên's dominant motive may have been he duly obtained his reward, for the local magistrate presented him with a scroll to hang over his door, bearing the words "A Filial Son."

## CHAPTER XII

### DEAD MEN AND GHOST-LORE

AN essential point in the Chinese conception of Filial Piety is that a father's death does not set the son free from the obligations of duty and reverence: it merely changes the outward form or expression of those obligations. He can no longer watch over his father's physical welfare and anticipate his material wants, but he can still bring peace and happiness to his father's spirit by living an upright life and bringing glory and prosperity to the family. If his abilities or opportunities are not such as to enable him to earn for his father posthumous honours (such as the Emperor confers upon the ancestors of those who have deserved well of the State) it is probably within his power to preserve intact the inherited property, to keep the family temple and tombs in good repair, to carry out with propriety and reverence the orthodox ancestral rites during his own lifetime and to provide for their continuance during future generations by bringing up a family of his own.

The Chinese belief with regard to the souls of the dead (or rather the ancient beliefs on which the ancestral ceremonies are based) are rather complicated. According to one doctrine every man has no less than ten souls, of which three are *yang* and seven are *yin*;<sup>1</sup> it is also said that what is called the *hun*-

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 262 *seq.*



soul goes to heaven, while the *p'ò* soul descends into the earth. The most popular view appears to be that every man has three souls allotted to him: of these one remains in or around the tomb, another hovers about the ancestral tablet, while the third wanders away and, after amalgamating itself with other mysterious forces, is finally reincarnated in another mortal body, which—unless the soul behaved very badly in its last incarnation—will be a human one. For the purpose of the ancestral cult the souls that are of importance are the grave-soul and the tablet-soul. The grave-soul receives its due share of “worship” at the great annual tomb-festivals of spring and autumn. The tablet-soul is supposed to take up its abode, by ceremonious invitation, in the spirit-tablet as soon as the body has been consigned to the grave. “From this very moment,” as Dr. De Groot says, “the tablet is considered to be imbued with the afflatus of the dead, and to have become his perpetual duplicate, to serve as a patron divinity in the domestic circle and there to receive the offspring’s sacrifices and worship.”<sup>1</sup>

The soul-tablets (*shên-chu*) of father, grandfather and great-grandfather are, in Weihaiwei, preserved in every private house, while the tablets of the earlier ancestors are deposited in the family temples. They are not exposed, either in house or in temple, except on ceremonial occasions, such as the first fifteen days of the first month of the year and the festival of the winter solstice (*Tung Chih*) at or about the time of the European Christmas. The *Chia Miao* or Ancestral Temple is usually the largest as well as the cleanest building in the village. The front gate, abutting on the main village street, leads into a small courtyard in which there is generally at least one cypress

<sup>1</sup> *The Religious System of China*, vol. i. p. 212. For full details as to the procedure at Chinese funerals and the religious ceremonies connected therewith, the reader is referred to Dr. De Groot’s monumental work, which deals minutely with this and kindred subjects.

tree.<sup>1</sup> The temple itself consists of a large room containing little or nothing but a few carved chairs, a table, and—last but not least—rows of boxes containing ancestral tablets. Each tablet consists of an oblong piece of hard wood (*catalpa* is chiefly used at Weihaiwei) about eight inches high and two inches broad, fitting into a wooden stand three inches broad and one inch high. The tablet has a recessed front, which bears an inscription more or less similar to that which appears on tombstones.<sup>2</sup> Into the recess slips a sliding front, on the outside of which the inscription is repeated in a slightly altered form. The outside of the tablet is often painted white, but the recessed front is left plain. Both inscriptions are written in black ink, but there is an important dot of red ink<sup>3</sup> on the top of the important character *chu*, which comes last.

The process of “dotting the chu” (*tien chu*) with red ink is an essential part of the ceremony whereby the wooden tablet becomes the abode of an ancestral soul. As a rule the tablet bears two names—those of husband and wife—so that each human soul is not necessarily supposed to have a tablet to itself. Just as the bodies of husband and wife share a single grave, so do their spirits (according to the theory accepted in Weihaiwei) share a single tablet, and the prayers and sacrifices that are offered to the one are intended in equal measure for the other.

The inscription on a tablet now before me<sup>4</sup> may be translated as follows. *Outside*. “The Spirit-tablet of my deceased honoured father and mother. I their

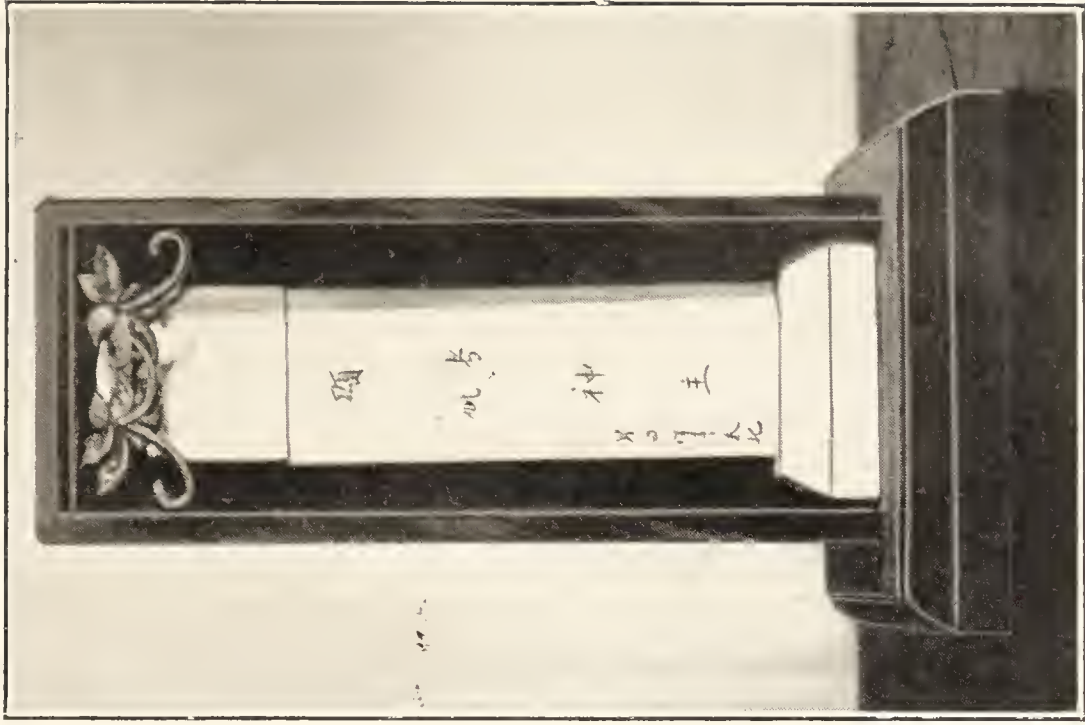
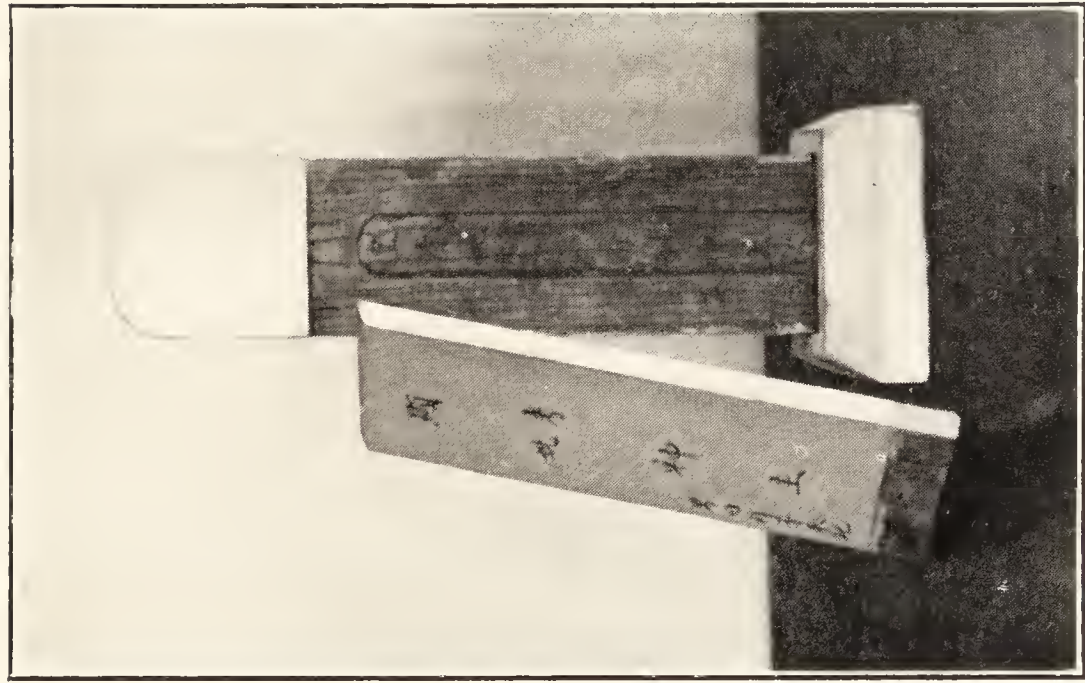
<sup>1</sup> See p. 263. Needless to say, the ancestral temples of great or wealthy families are on a very much grander scale.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 256.

<sup>3</sup> Instead of red ink it is in some parts of China customary to use blood extracted from a cock's comb. For an explanation of this, and for a full description of the ceremony of dotting the tablet, see De Groot, *op. cit.* vol. i. pp. 214–19.

<sup>4</sup> See illustration.





SPIRIT-TABLETS.

In the illustration on the left the slide has been removed.





son Yüeh-hsiang reverentially make obeisance and offer sacrifice.”<sup>1</sup> *Inside*. “The Imperial Ch’ing Dynasty. The Spirit-tablet of Yao Fêng-chu, the eldest son of his generation,<sup>2</sup> and his wife Chang Shih.” Sometimes dates are added on the tablet but these are not essential, as all such records are preserved in the genealogical table or pedigree-scroll. On ceremonial occasions the tablets are set out in due order, so that the spirits may be comforted by the sacrificial offerings and by the sight of the many prosperous-looking descendants who have assembled to do them honour. In front of the tablets are set up sticks of fragrant incense, and all the members of the family present themselves in turn and bow reverently towards the souls of their dead forefathers.

The little ceremony is as simple and yet as impressive as could well be imagined. For the first few days of the New Year the pedigree-scroll (*chia p’u*), which is carefully wrapped up and put away at ordinary times, is unrolled and hung on the wall, where it receives a share of the reverence paid to the tablets. The scroll is often a beautiful work of art, painted to represent a temple or a grand family mansion,<sup>3</sup> while the names of the past generations are inscribed in successive rows so that the space devoted to each name looks a spirit-tablet in miniature. In some parts of China, but not in Weihaiwei, it is customary to have family portraits painted for the purpose of preserving the “shadow-semblances” (*ying hsiang*) of ancestors as sacred heirlooms in the family temples. Like the pedigree-scroll, such portraits are exposed to view on solemn occasions only. They are often painted while the subject is on his death-bed or immediately after his death. De Groot<sup>4</sup> compares

<sup>1</sup> The terms used are honorific.

<sup>2</sup> That is, the eldest son of his father.

<sup>3</sup> See illustration facing next page, and that facing p. 278.

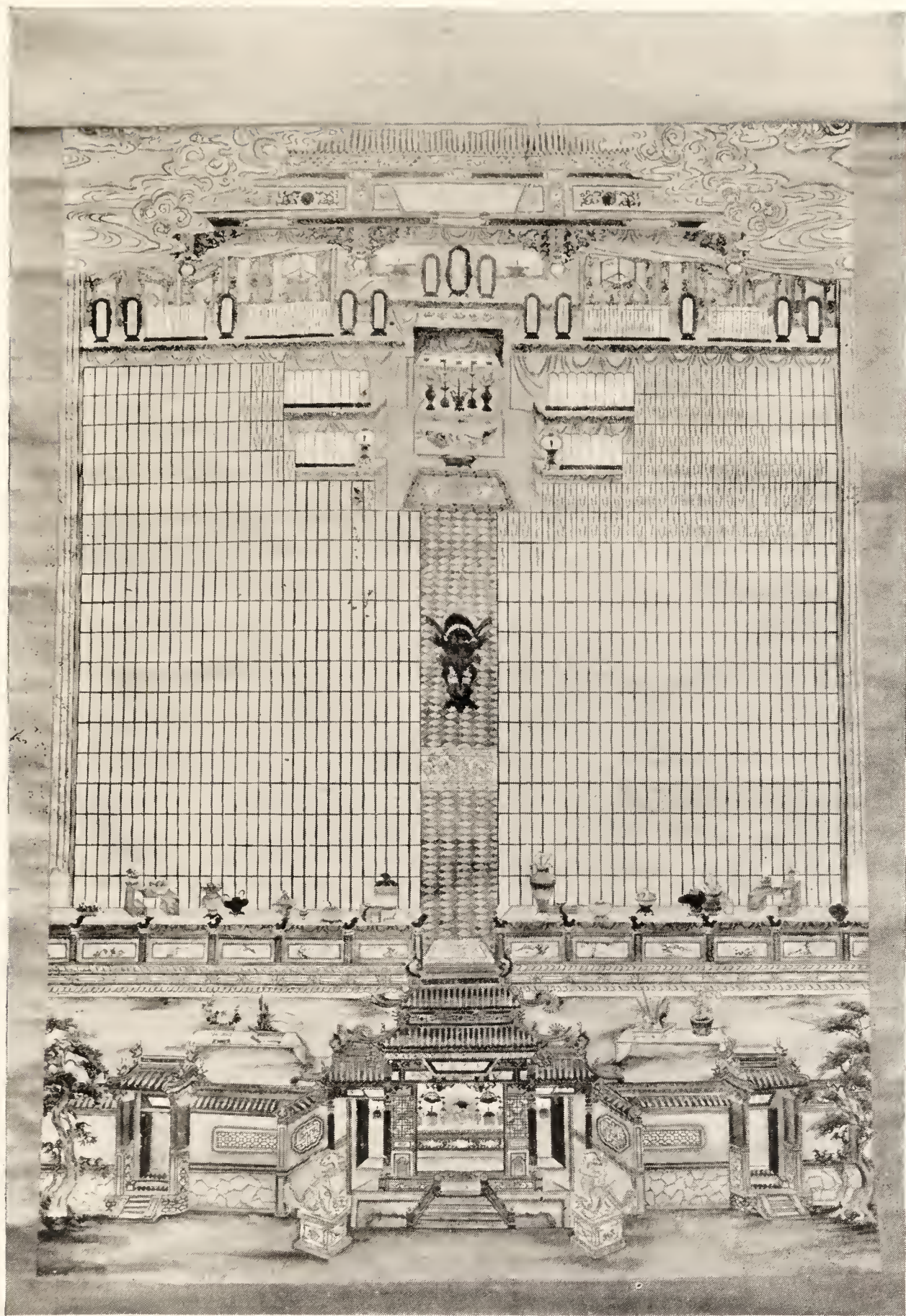
<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 114.

these family portraits with the *imagines maiorum* of the ancient Romans.

A Chinese who emigrates to a foreign land rarely fails to make an agreement, either with his employers or with his compatriots, that if he dies while abroad his body is to be taken back not only to China but to his native town or village, wherever that may be. This peculiarity on the part of the Chinese is so well recognised by every one concerned that most European shipping firms trading in the Eastern seas are obliged to make special arrangements for conveying cargoes of coffins at moderate rates up and down the coast of China and from the various countries bordering on the Pacific where there are Chinese merchants and labourers. Probably it is generally supposed that the Chinese—like the people of other countries, only more so—are so sentimentally attached to their old homes that they will not venture to go abroad unless they are sure of returning to it some day as dead men if not as living ones. This is true to a certain extent. The average Chinese dearly loves his old home, and considering that it has been the home of his ancestors for a length of time that would make the oldest ancestral estate in England ashamed of itself, it is no wonder that he should regard it with affection.

But there is another reason why it is considered important that every Chinese—at least every Chinese who has sons of his own and has maintained connection with the old stock from which he sprang—should lay his bones beside those of his fathers. The Chinese theory is that some mysterious sympathy exists, even after death, between the soul and the body, and that unless the body is brought to the place where the ancestral *sacra* are carried out it will be impossible to provide for the sacrificial rites that ought to be rendered to the soul. The family at home will thus lose one of its ancestral links, and the dead man's spirit will wander homeless and lordless in the world





*Photo by Ah Fong, Weihaiwei.*

A PEDIGREE-SCROLL (CHIA P'U) (see p. 279).





of shades: an ancestral ghost separated for ever from communion with its fellows.

It is partly because of this supposed connection between soul and body that the Chinese abhor the idea of descending to their graves in a mutilated condition. Thus in China decapitation is a more serious punishment than strangulation, because it is thought that the headless man may become a headless ghost. The danger of appearing in a mutilated condition in the next world is, however, lessened or averted if the severed members can be buried along with the body to which they belonged. A Chinese servant in Weihaiwei not long ago begged for an old biscuit-tin from his foreign master in order that he might give it to a friend who wished to use it as a coffin for his amputated foot.<sup>1</sup>

It is the hope of every Chinese, then, that when he dies he will be laid in his ancestral graveyard, and that he will be laid there in a state of organic completeness. But there are occasions, of course, when it has proved impossible to convey dead men's bones from one end of China to another, or home from a foreign land: sometimes the family cannot afford the expense, sometimes there are overwhelming difficulties with regard to transport. Chinese ingenuity long ago set itself to devise a means whereby even such bad cases as this might have a happy ending, and it succeeded. The body itself, it was argued, is of no real importance: for sentimental reasons it is satisfactory to be able to bury the bodies of the dead in their ancestral graveyards, but otherwise there is no urgency in the matter provided only the dead man's

<sup>1</sup> We may smile at Chinese simplicity in such matters, but exactly the same ideas have existed in the West. "A woman in our parish," writes a resident in Wiltshire, "had her leg amputated and got a little coffin made for it. She caused it to be buried in the churchyard"—with the view of joining it there at some future day. Many similar cases have been observed in Ireland, and doubtless in many other parts of western Europe. (See *Folk-lore*, March 1907, pp. 82-3, and June 1907, p. 216.)

souls—in spite of the absence of the body with which they were associated—can be persuaded or induced to take up their respective abodes in the ancestral graveyard and in the spirit-tablet. The problem was solved by calling in the aid of religion, and the ceremony observed is in outline something like this.

The members of the deceased's family, clad of course in funereal garb, call in a priest who, in accordance with the data provided by them, prepares a scroll containing the dead man's name and age and the date and place of his death. They then make a very rough effigy of a man—a few twisted straws are quite good enough—and on the effigy they pin the scroll. The priest now performs the ceremony of "calling the soul back"—that is to say, he recites certain charms which are supposed to reach the wandering spirit, wherever it may be, and to draw it to the place where the ceremony is to take place. The utterance of a few more charms is supposed to be sufficient to attach the spirit to the effigy—or rather to the scroll—which is then placed in a miniature coffin and buried with the rites observed at ordinary funerals. The man himself, to all intents and purposes, now lies buried in the ancestral graveyard, and all that remains to be done is to evoke the spiritual presence that will in future inhabit the *shên-chu* or spirit-tablet. When this has been done (just in the same way as when a real corpse lies buried) the ceremony is at an end: the soul, or rather the combination of souls, has been saved from homelessness, and will in future assume its proper position as an ancestral ghost both in the family graveyard and in the ancestral temple.

This remarkable custom is obviously such a convenient means of avoiding the trouble and expense of conveying dead bodies from distant places, that its comparative rarity may well be a matter of some surprise. Certainly, if the practice were to come into common use it would indirectly give a great impulse to emigration: for which reason it may perhaps be



hoped by some Western peoples that it will for ever remain unfashionable. The custom is, however, an exceedingly old one, and was practised even at the Imperial Court nearly nineteen centuries ago.<sup>1</sup> There seems to have always been a strong prejudice against it, partly because it was a foolish superstition and partly because it would tempt the people to cease troubling themselves about the burial of their parents or bringing home their bodies from a distance, and would thus tend to the degradation or weakening of the ideals of filial piety. Hence we find that the practice of burying souls without the bodies was in 318 A.D. condemned by Imperial Decree as heretical;<sup>2</sup> yet this condemnation by no means brought about its discontinuance, and the present legal position is that the "violation of a grave in which an evoked soul is interred shall be punished just as severely as the violation of a grave occupied by a corpse,"<sup>3</sup> that is to say the offender may be sentenced to death.

In his interesting section on this strange custom Dr. De Groot remarks that as it has been "of common prevalence for at least eighteen centuries" its occurrence even nowadays can hardly be doubted. It certainly exists at Weihaiwei, though it is not in very common use. One reason for practising it in this little corner of China is based on the very strong belief that husband and wife should always be buried in the same grave. If the husband dies while he is abroad and the body is lost or cannot be brought home, nothing is necessarily done until his widow (who has remained at home) dies also. When she is buried, her husband's soul is ceremonially summoned to take up its residence in a paper scroll bearing the *pa ko tzŭ* ("eight characters" naming the year, month,

<sup>1</sup> De Groot, *op. cit.* vol. iii. p. 848.

<sup>2</sup> De Groot, *loc. cit.* p. 849.

<sup>3</sup> De Groot, *loc. cit.* p. 854. The punishment under the Penal Code for opening a grave and exposing the corpse is strangulation (subject to confirmation).

day and hour of birth), and this, with or without a straw effigy, is formally placed in the grave by the widow's side.

A practical reason for this proceeding at once suggests itself if it has happened that the couple were childless and were the owners of property. It then becomes necessary for the elders of the clan to select an heir; and as an adopted heir—who must be a “spare” son of a relative—is obliged to separate himself from his own branch of the clan and to regard the dead man and his wife for the future as his proper parents, matters must be so arranged that he can become possessor of his adoptive father's spirit-tablet. As the dead man's spirit is not supposed to take up its abode in the tablet until he has been interred with the proper rites in the family graveyard, it is necessary, if his body is missing, to evoke and inter its spiritual representative. If this were not done, the adopted heir would be unable to carry on the ancestral rites except in an irregular way, and this might lead to serious legal difficulties later on in the event of another member of the clan disputing the genuineness of the adoption and heirship.

A point worth noting in connection with ancestral worship and adoption is that (in this part of China at least) the mere fact of childlessness does not necessarily lead a man to adopt a son: it is childlessness combined with the ownership of property that induces him to do so. We will suppose that a man has obtained his share of the family inheritance; that it is too small to support him; that he has sold it to relatives and with the cash proceeds has gone abroad to make a living; that he returns as an old man, childless and penniless: this man will in all probability show no desire to adopt a son, nor indeed is it likely that he could succeed in doing so if he wished it. The ancestral worship will not suffer by his childless death provided he has brothers and nephews to perpetuate the family *sacra*. Even if it



happens that he is actually the last of his house and that his death will bring the ancestral cult of his line to an abrupt conclusion, it is not likely that, for the sole purpose of carrying on the sacra, the last of the line will bestir himself to go through the formalities necessary for the adoption of a son. The fact is that the possession of property—especially landed property—is regarded in practice as an inseparable condition of the continuation of the ancestral rites. This theory is often expressed in the formula *mei-yu ch'an-yeh mei-yu shên-chu*—"no ancestral property, no ancestral tablets." If the spirits of the deceased ancestors have been so regardless of the interests of their descendants that they have allowed the family property to pass into the hands of strangers, it is thought that they have only themselves to blame if for them the smoke of incense no longer curls heavenward from the domestic altars. Indeed, there is a vague idea that as the family line dwindles and finally becomes extinct on the material plane, so on the spiritual plane the ancestral ghosts gradually fade away either into non-existence or into a state of Nirvana-like quiescence.

A childless old man who has property is in China, as in the West, the object of the most tender solicitude on the part of brothers and cousins with large families. They are continually impressing upon him the gravity of his offence in not providing for the succession and for the suitable disposal of his property, and unceasingly urge the claims of this nephew or that to formal adoption. If the old man has chosen a boy or young man for whom he happens to have affection, and if the choice meets with general approval, then every one is happy, and an adoption deed is drawn up and attested by all the near relatives. But if his choice falls on one who is considered to be too distant a connection for adoption, or if the elders of the clan for some other reason object to the proposal, then the old man is in a difficulty, for

he is not entirely a free agent in the matter. He might get an adoption deed drawn up without consulting any one, but if it were not properly attested by his relatives it would be treated by them as null and void. Adoption, no less than the sale of land, is an affair not of the individual but of the family.

Disputes of this kind are the not infrequent cause of lawsuits. An old man once complained before me that though the youth he wished to adopt belonged to the proper generation (that is, the generation immediately junior to that of the adopter) and was not an only son, and though both the youth and his father had agreed to the adoption, yet the other relatives had held aloof when they were invited to sign the adoption deed, and had absolutely refused to take any part in the proceedings. This implied, of course, that when the time came they would refuse to recognise the legality of the adoption. He therefore besought me to compel or persuade the obstinate relatives to come to a more reasonable frame of mind. "I am now eighty-one years old"—so ran the preamble of his petition—"and I do not know how long I have to live. When morning dawns I cannot be sure that I shall see the evening; in another day my eyes may be closed for ever; and if I die with the bitter knowledge that for me there will be no ancestral sacrifices, then, indeed, miserable shall I be down in the Yellow Springs [of death]." It is of course impossible to decide such cases without taking into full account the nature of the objections raised by the relatives: they are often selfish, but as a rule they are not baseless or frivolous.

Ancestral spirits are regarded as beneficent beings who never causelessly use their mysterious powers to injure the living; but if their descendants lead evil lives, or neglect the family sacrifices, or treat the sacred rules of filial piety with contempt, then the spirits will in all probability exercise the parental prerogatives of punishment. The power of a father



in China to castigate his son is theoretically as absolute in the case of a grown-up son as in the case of one who is still a child: similarly it is supposed that the father does not, by the mere accident of death, divest himself of his patriarchal rights of administering justice and inflicting punishment on his sons and grandsons. Provided a man carefully observes the traditional ceremonies and leads a good life according to the accepted ethics of his race, he knows that he has nothing to fear from the souls of his ancestors.

But there are in China various classes of ghosts who are supposed to be highly malevolent and to constitute no small danger to the community. There are, for example, the ghosts whose tempers have been soured by calamity and misfortune; those whose bodies have not been buried; those who were drowned at sea; those who ended their mortal lives by unjustifiable suicide and haunt the place where they died until they can, by ghostly suggestions, prevail on one of their earthly neighbours to follow their example;<sup>1</sup> those who died before accomplishing a vow or completing an act of vengeance: these and many others are ghosts or evil spirits which the wise man who walks warily through life will do his best to avoid.

The curious and cruel superstition which sometimes prevents a Chinese from helping a drowning comrade even when he could save the man without danger to himself has its origin in a fear that he will incur the deadly hostility of a spirit that demands the toll of a human life. It is even thought in some places that by saving your friend you may be condemning yourself to be his future substitute. This superstition has existed in many parts of the world—from Ireland to the Solomon Islands.<sup>2</sup> It need hardly be said that

<sup>1</sup> See p. 222.

<sup>2</sup> See Grant Allen's *Evolution of the Idea of God* (pp. 265-7); Tylor's *Primitive Culture* (4th ed.), vol. i. pp. 108-11; W. G.

educated opinion in China is altogether opposed to the heartless abandonment of drowning men: the superstition is an active force only in a few localities, and only to a minute extent, if at all, may it be said to exist in Weihaiwei.

A vestige of it is possibly to be traced in the fact that "wrecking" is not regarded as a very serious breach of sound ethics. When British rule was first established at Weihaiwei pitiful scenes were to be witnessed during the tempests of winter, when junk after junk was hurled against the rock-bound coast. No great effort was made to save human life; indeed, there is reason to believe that men were allowed to freeze to death on the shore or to be battered to death by the merciless waves while those who could and should have come to their rescue actually stepped over their bodies while on the eager search for remnants of wrecked cargo. All this has been so greatly changed that storm-driven junks in the Gulf of Chihli have been known to make deliberately for the coasts of Weihaiwei, their crews believing that if disaster must come there would be a greater chance of safety for themselves and less risk of having their cargoes looted on the shores of British territory than anywhere else along the coast of Shantung. Two or three of the village headmen have shown great loyalty in accepting and carrying out British policy in this matter, and have been personally instrumental in saving numbers of lives and in helping the crews of wrecked junks to salve their cargoes and to repair the damage done

Black's *Folk-Medicine*, p. 29; and Dennys's *Folk-lore of China*, p. 22. The superstition sometimes takes the form of a belief that the rescued man will some day do some terrible injury to his rescuer—perhaps at the instigation of the evil spirit who was balked of his prey. It is quite erroneous to suppose that this superstitious objection to saving the drowning is prevalent throughout all China. De Groot (*op. cit.* vol. v. p. 526) states that he never found a trace of it in the province of Fuhkien; "while, moreover, all the Chinese we interrogated on this head protested against their humanity being thus called in question."





A WRECKED JUNK.



A JUNK ASHORE.





to their vessels. The headman who has shown himself most energetic in this good work deserves special mention. He is Ch'ê Shuo-hsüeh, the district headman of Hai-hsi-t'ou. To him the Government of Weihaiwei has presented a *pien* or carved complimentary tablet.<sup>1</sup> The inscription reads *Chêng jên yü wei*—"Human lives rescued from peril." Tablets of this kind when presented by the official authorities are highly valued by the Chinese, and are preserved as heirlooms.

But the spirits that drag men into the waters of a river or down to Lung Wang's palace in the depths of ocean at least make a practice of confining their activity to their chosen element. Far more dangerous are the gloomy homeless souls that stalk the country fields and prowl round villages, always on the lookout for victims and always ready to deceive the ignorant. There are terrible vampires and devil-foxes that throw mists over men's eyes and minds and make them believe they see before them damsels of bewitching beauty. It is difficult indeed to save any one who has once passed under the dominion of a fox-wife: he is a doomed man. A prevalent belief on the subject of ghosts and goblins and evil spirits is based on a kind of theory of predestination. The man who is fated not to be bothered by such beings will escape them; he who is fated to be their prey cannot by any possibility avoid them. The Chinese popular saying puts it more neatly: "He who is born lucky can laugh at demons; the unlucky wight becomes the demon's plaything."

The Weihaiwei Annals tell a story of a man who must have been born lucky. His name was Kuo and he belonged to Ch'in Ts'un, a village that lies a few miles from Port Edward. One evening he was returning from the sea-side with a load of fish. On the way he met a ghost, who pressed Kuo to allow him to carry his load. Kuo, not in the least dismayed,

<sup>1</sup> For the headman in question and his *pien*, see illustration.

congratulated himself on a welcome relief and promptly placed his burden on the ghost's shoulders. Man and ghost trudged along contentedly side by side for some distance, but on arriving at Ch'in Ts'un the dogs began to bark, and the ghost, thinking this was no place for him, suggested that he must say good-bye. Kuo refused to hear of such a thing and insisted that the ghost should accompany him home and share his evening meal. On reaching home Kuo asked his unearthly visitor to sit down, and ordered his wife and child to set about getting supper ready. When the water was boiling he furtively threw into the cooking-pot some fragments of decayed wood and an old nail. The whole party, including the ghost, enjoyed a hearty meal, and when it was over the ghost took his leave without having done the least harm to any one.

"If men are not afraid of ghosts," adds the Weihaiwei chronicler, "ghosts will not be able to do them any injury. When this story is attentively considered the truth of that statement will become increasingly evident." But he tells the story with perhaps the suggestion of a twinkle in his eye: for in the course of the narrative he interjects the remark, to which he adds no comment, that Kuo's besetting weakness was strong drink. It is remarkable that he offers no explanation of Kuo's action in throwing pieces of decayed wood and a nail into the cooking-pot, though this was just where Kuo showed his cunning. To put rotten wood and old iron into one's porridge will appear a meaningless rite to the uninstructed. It is a practical illustration of a popular Chinese belief that marvellous efficacy in destroying the evil influences of ghosts and demons and other ill-omened beings is inherent in rotten wood and nails taken from *old coffin-boards* which have been actually used for the burial of a corpse. Kuo's rotten wood was—though the chronicler leaves that important point to his reader's intelligence—wood that had once formed



part of a coffin.<sup>1</sup> This little story shows conclusively that though in Europe if one sups with the devil one must use a long spoon, in Weihaiwei one wants nothing more than a piece of coffin-wood and an old nail.

As it is no one's special business to propitiate malevolent spirits, the obligation is one that is understood

<sup>1</sup> For an account of the popular belief with regard to old coffin-wood and nails, see De Groot, *op. cit.* vol. i. pp. 328-9. See also Doolittle's *Social Life of the Chinese*, p. 561; and Dennys's *Folk-lore of China* (p. 48), where it is said that "a nail that has been used in fastening up a coffin is a sovereign charm. This is sometimes beaten out into a rod or wire and, encased in silver, worn as a ring round the ankles or wrists." It is very curious that even in this matter of coffin-nails we can trace a close connection between Chinese and Western European folk-lore. In the Shetland Islands (which seem to possess many remarkable parallels with Chinese folk-lore) it is said that tooth-ache can be cured by picking the tooth "with the nail of an old coffin." (*Folk-lore Journal*, vol. iii. p. 380.) In parts of Yorkshire it was once the custom to take some coffin-lead or other coffin-metal from a churchyard and have it made into a ring; it then became a cure for cramp. (*County Folk-lore*, vol. ii. [North Riding of Yorkshire] p. 171.) Similar beliefs existed elsewhere in England—in Devonshire, for example. (See W. G. Black's *Folk-Medicine*, p. 175.) It may be noted here that a thoroughly "orthodox" coffin in China is supposed to have no nails at all, or as few as possible. The various planks are fitted into grooves and notches with the deliberate intention of avoiding the necessity of nails. This doctrine is well understood at Weihaiwei and followed there as far as practicable. The explanation of the nailless coffin given by De Groot is that it dates from a period in extreme antiquity *when iron was unknown*. The form of coffin that was adopted in a primitive age from necessity is used in modern times from a spirit of conservatism, or from reverence for a custom that time has sanctified. (See De Groot, *op. cit.* vol. i. pp. 95 and 286-7.) In Weihaiwei and many other places a single nail *which serves no practical purpose* is driven in (only far enough to make it immobile) on one side of the coffin-lid, and this nail is decorated with parti-coloured threads. The people of Weihaiwei seem to have no explanation of this custom, but it is evidently a kind of charm to bring wealth, happiness and an ample progeny to the family. The charm is based on a play on the word *ting*, "nail," which also means *a man*, or *male offspring*. As the nail (*ting*) is driven into the parent's coffin, so, it is thought, will there always be males (*ting*) to carry on the family; and as these five-coloured threads are wound round the nail, so will wealth, prosperity, honours, long life and many children be the portion of the sons of the family for all time to come.

to rest with the Government. Among the numerous religious duties of the district-magistrates is that of quieting the evil propensities of all bad ghosts or spirits. In the district-city of Jung-ch'êng, for instance, among the altars at which official rites must periodically take place is one called the *Li T'an*, a phrase which may be translated as an Altar to Evil Spirits. Three times a year—namely at the three great festivals of the Dead or Souls' Days<sup>1</sup>—the district-magistrate and other local officials attired in ceremonial robes proceed to the *Li T'an* and there offer up sacrifices of propitiation to all harmful spirits. The process consists in issuing to all homeless and tablet-less ghosts a solemn invitation to a banquet. The viands provided are three sheep, three pigs, three measures of grain and an indefinite quantity of paper-money. All this is supposed to satiate or pacify the spirits so that they cease to do harm to mankind at least until the arrival of the next sacrificial festival.

In China, as in Europe, there are various strange beliefs connected with the mysterious powers supposed to be inherent in corpses. As soon as a man or woman is dead the family take care that no dogs or cats (especially cats) shall be allowed into the mortuary chamber, as it is believed that so long as the coffin has not been closed the approach of one of these animals will cause the corpse to jump. This is a well-known superstition in Weihaiwei; and from De Groot's work, which deals more particularly with a portion of the southern province of Fuhkien, it may be gathered that it exists in other parts of the Empire also.<sup>2</sup> De Groot (who mentions cats only, not dogs) accounts for the idea by referring it to the domain of tiger-lore. Each member of the feline race, he says, is supposed to have on its tail a miraculous hair, which has the power of bringing the soul back to any human body from which

<sup>1</sup> See p. 192.

<sup>2</sup> De Groot, *op. cit.* vol. i. pp. 43-4; vol. v. p. 750. See also Dennys's *Folk-lore of China*, p. 20.



it had already departed. But why should this be objected to, seeing that, as De Groot has himself pointed out, the main object of the tearless howling at Chinese funerals, which has so often rather unjustly excited the ridicule of Europeans, is to call back the soul of the departed?

The explanation that has been given me in Weihaiwei, with regard to the cat and dog superstition, is that the hair or fur of these animals (especially that of the cat) contains so much "lightning" (electricity) that the corpse is liable to be galvanised by it into an uncanny though only temporary activity. Whatever the true explanation may be, it is interesting to note that here we have one more of those very numerous fragments of folk-lore that connect the far East with the far West. In the Orkneys and Shetlands, when a death has taken place and the corpse has been laid out, *all cats are locked up*.<sup>1</sup> It would be interesting to know what the local explanation of the custom is in that corner of the British Isles. Similar beliefs as to the malign influence of cats on corpses exist in the Border country. On the Scottish side it is believed to be so unlucky for a dog or cat to pass over a corpse that the poor animal, if it has been seen doing so, is—or used to be—killed without mercy.<sup>2</sup> Mr. G. L. Gomme, who cites this Scottish superstition from Pennant, states that the same belief is to be found in Northumberland. "In one case," he says, "just as a funeral was about to leave the house, the cat jumped over the coffin, and no one would move till the cat was destroyed."<sup>3</sup> A dog, too, was killed on another occasion for a similar reason. That there is a close connection between

<sup>1</sup> *County Folk-lore*, vol. iii. (Orkney and Shetland), p. 216.

<sup>2</sup> Pennant's *Tour in Scotland*. See also Brand's *Antiquities*, vol. ii. p. 233.

<sup>3</sup> G. L. Gomme's *Folk-lore Relics of Early Village Life*, p. 116. I cannot agree with Mr. Gomme's interpretation of the superstition. He regards it as connected with the "primitive hearth sacrifice." The Chinese parallels seem to have been unknown to him.

cats and evil spirits may be taken as one of the elementary doctrines of "black magic," both in China and in Europe;<sup>1</sup> but popular antipathy to the unfortunate animal on this account has never become so intense in China as at one time it became in Europe, where—in Paris and other places—cats used to be burned alive in bonfires.<sup>2</sup>

Among other superstitions connected with corpses may be mentioned that relating to mirrors, though in Weihaiwei it is very nearly extinct. In many parts of China, when a death occurs all mirrors in the house are immediately covered up. One explanation of the custom is that if the dead man happens to notice a reflection of himself in the glass he will be much horrified to find that he has become a ghost, and much disappointed with his own appearance as such. Another explanation is that every mirror has a mysterious faculty of invisibly retaining and storing up everything that is reflected on its surface, and that if anything so ill-omened as a corpse or a ghost were to pass before it, the mirror would thenceforth become a permanent radiator of bad luck. In some Chinese households mirrors are covered up or turned upside-down, not only when a corpse is in the house, but after sundown every day: for it is thought that evil spirits and other unlucky influences are free at night to wander whither they will, and that if they pass in front of a mirror that is not covered, that mirror will become a source of danger and unhappiness to the family that owns it. The mirror superstition, like that of cats, is not confined to China. In Orkney and Shetland, when a death occurs, not only are all cats locked up, as already mentioned, but covers are put over all looking-glasses.<sup>3</sup> The same custom exists on the Scottish mainland<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For China, see Dennys's *Folk-lore of China*, pp. 48, 90–91.

<sup>2</sup> See Frazer's *Golden Bough* (2nd ed.), vol. iii. pp. 324 *seq.*

<sup>3</sup> *County Folk-lore*, vol. iii. (Orkney and Shetland), p. 216.

<sup>4</sup> *Folk-lore Journal*, vol. ii. p. 281.



and also in many other parts of Europe, including England, Belgium and Germany; and it is also to be found in Madagascar and in India.<sup>1</sup>

But the cat and mirror notions sink into insignificance when we contemplate another corpse-superstition to be found at Weihaiwei and in other parts of China: a superstition of so extraordinary a nature that it is almost certain to be received with incredulity by all who are not in a position personally to verify the fact of its existence. It is said that when a death has occurred the face of the corpse and all other exposed parts (such as the hands) should be carefully covered with a cloth, in order to prevent the tears of the mourners from coming in contact with the dead man's flesh. To make doubly sure, it is considered advisable for the mourners not to weep over the corpse, but at some little distance from it. If these precautions are neglected and tears do by some chance fall on the corpse, and if this happens on an "unlucky" <sup>2</sup> day, the results may be disastrous, not only to the family chiefly concerned, but also to the whole population of the district. The tears, it is said, find their way through the dead man's skin into his heart, where they are liable to create in him a kind of quasi-vitality long after he has been consigned to his grave. On his body will grow wings and white feathers, and though he remain in his grave he is able to use these feathers and wings with extraordinary effect. Just as he absorbed the tear-drops of his weeping friends, so he is supposed to attract to his own grave all the moisture that should be distributed in the form of rain over the whole country round, and by moving his wings to and fro he so fans the clouds that no rain

<sup>1</sup> Frazer's *Golden Bough* (2nd ed.), vol. iii. pp. 294 *seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Every day in the Chinese calendar is either lucky, unlucky, or indifferent; and very many people will undertake no duty or work of importance until they have consulted the fortune-telling almanac (a new one is issued for each year), or have at least consulted temple oracles. The Jewish Sabbath is now believed to have originated in a similar superstition.

descends except on his own grave. Some say that the horrible feathered creature is able to leave his grave at night and fly through the neighbourhood in the terrible guise of a malevolent demon. If he knocks at a door, it is believed that one of the inmates of the house is doomed to a speedy death.<sup>1</sup> If the locality is visited by a prolonged drought and the usual official prayers have been unavailing, the people petition the magistrate to send out his runners to inspect all the graveyards of the neighbourhood.

As soon as they have found one on which the soil is soft and moist while all the surrounding grass-mounds are parched and brown, this is regarded as a proof that a *han-pa* (such is the technical name of the feathered corpse) lies in that spot. The wet grave has no sooner been discovered than the magistrate or some person authorised by him leads thither a crowd of the local people armed with brooms<sup>2</sup> and hooks. The coffin is exhumed and the lid opened. No sooner is this done than all the bystanders rush forward with their weapons to strike down the corpse or to trip him up or hook him if he attempts to run or fly away: for this, according to the story, is what the *han-pa* always tries to do. As soon as he has been carefully secured and recoffined, the dreaded *han-pa* is placed on a heap of firewood and burned to ashes. Copious rain is certain to fall the same evening or the following day. Faith in this remarkable superstition seems to be well rooted in Weihaiwei. One of my informants, himself a believer, expressed amazement at hearing that no such notions existed in England. On being asked why it was considered necessary to open the coffin-lid, he said it was to enable the relatives of the dead man to see for themselves that the corpse really was a *han-pa*, and

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the Irish and Scottish banshee.

<sup>2</sup> All evil demons are supposed to be afraid of brooms. See p. 190 (note).



that there was no alternative but to burn it: otherwise they might feel that their dead relative had been grievously maligned and his remains treated with unpardonable disrespect. "What happens," I asked, "when the dead man turns out to be just an ordinary corpse?" "But that could never be," was the decisive answer. "The moist grave in a time of drought is an infallible sign of a *han-pa*. There can be no mistake."

I have described this superstition as it exists at Weihaiwei, but it is by no means confined to that locality. The word *han-pa* means "demon of drought," and the earliest mention of it in extant Chinese literature is in the beautiful hymn of King Hsüan, preserved in the Book of Poetry (*Shih Ching*) edited by Confucius.<sup>1</sup> It is there mentioned as being the cause of a great drought that appears to have occurred about the year 821 B.C. The drought-demon is also referred to in the *Shan Hai Ching*, a curious quasi-geographical work of disputed date. A certain Taoist Book of Marvels tells us that "in the southern regions there is a man-like creature two or three feet high, with a naked body and an eye on the top of its head. It moves with the swiftness of wind, and wherever it is seen a calamitous drought is sure to occur. It is called *pa*."<sup>2</sup> From none of these authorities do we gather that there was any connection between the drought-demon and a human corpse over which tears had been shed. Wang Ch'ung (first century A.D.) writes of "flying corpses" (*fei shih*),<sup>3</sup> but this does not bring us much further. How the superstition as it at present exists grew up is far from clear, and it seems likely that it represents a coalescence of several beliefs that were once quite separate. De Groot discusses the subject with his usual thorough-

<sup>1</sup> See Legge's *Chinese Classics*, vol. iv. pt. ii. p. 532. The passage referred to is translated by Legge thus: "The demon of drought [*han-pa*] exercises his oppression, as if scattering flames and fire."

<sup>2</sup> This passage is quoted in the K'ang Hsi dictionary, s.v. *Pa*.

<sup>3</sup> *Lun Hêng*, transl. by Forke, pt. i. p. 243.

ness,<sup>1</sup> though he does not appear to have come across the superstition in the form in which it is known at Weihaiwei.

It might well be supposed that in the *han-pa*, if in nothing else, we have come across a piece of Chinese folk-lore that has no parallel in Europe; but perhaps our supposition would be unwarrantably hasty. I find that in the Highlands of Scotland "it was thought wrong to weep, lest the tears should hurt the dead."<sup>2</sup> Then again there is, or was, an English superstition against the use of certain feathers in feather-beds and pillows. The feathers of the domestic fowl, goose, pigeon, partridge, and sometimes those of wild birds generally, were tabooed.<sup>3</sup> No reason has been given so far as I know for this singular and apparently senseless idea, any more than for the Highland notion that tears were hurtful to the dead. It may be far-fetched to suppose on the strength of these old wives' tales that the shedding of tears over corpses was once believed by our own remote ancestors to turn dead men into feathered demons like the Chinese *han-pa*; but perhaps it might appear less unlikely that there is some extremely ancient and now forgotten connection between the British and the Chinese superstitions if we were able to find some traces of similar beliefs in the intervening countries of Europe or Asia.

For long I despaired of finding anything that might be regarded as a missing link; but Bohemia is the country that seems to have supplied it at last. The following letter will show that in Europe, as well as in Far Cathay, there still exists in our own generation the remnant of a belief that drought may in certain

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* vol. v. pp. 516-20, 761. For remarks on human spectres in the shape of birds, see vol. v. pp. 634 *seq.* For a reference to the spectres known in Europe as Vampires, see vol. v. p. 747 *seq.* For evidence as to the supposed existence of vampires and grave-demons in the Malay States, see Skeat's *Malay Magic*, pp. 103 and 327.

<sup>2</sup> *Folk-lore Journal*, vol. ii. (1884), p. 281.

<sup>3</sup> *Folk-lore*, September 1900, p. 243.



circumstances be caused by a human corpse, and that such a corpse is in some mysterious way associated with feathers.

"In the Bohemian village of Metschin," says a writer in *Folk-lore*,<sup>1</sup> "the body of the schoolmaster, who was buried early in May amid many marks of respect from the inhabitants, is to be exhumed. There, as elsewhere, a great drought prevails, and the story has got about that a cushion with feathers was put under his head. Nine-tenths of the population believe that this is the cause of the drought, hence the proposal to exhume him and remove the cushion, which is in reality filled with hay. Is this case parallel to the prejudice against the feathers of certain birds in beds and pillows, or is there some special connection between feathers and rain? More particularly in Australia feathers and hair are associated with rain-making."

It will be noticed that in China the drought-causing demon grows the feathers on its own body, whereas in Bohemia it merely lies on a feathered pillow. That the two beliefs had a common origin, and that the two British superstitions already cited may be connected with them, will not, perhaps, be regarded as altogether beyond the bounds of possibility.

<sup>1</sup> Mädi Braitmaier in *Folk-lore*, December 1900, p. 437.

## CHAPTER XIII

### CONFUCIANISM—I

VARIOUS religious notions and practices of the people of Weihaiwei have been already dealt with in connection with other subjects, but it remains to investigate more thoroughly the relations that exist in this part of the Empire between the so-called Three Religions of China (Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism) and the extent to which they severally contribute to the religious life of the people.

A writer quoted in the Ning-hai Chronicle says of the inhabitants of this district that their customs are thoroughly orthodox, or, as he expresses it, "in complete accordance with the doctrines of Tsou and Lu,"—the native states of Mencius and Confucius respectively. The rituals connected with the worship—if it may be so termed<sup>1</sup>—of Confucius himself have, however, no place in the ordinary religious observances of the millions of China, and this is just as true of

<sup>1</sup> It is perhaps still necessary to explain that in spite of the honorary epithets heaped on Confucius by imperial decree (as in the decree that confers upon him an "equality with heaven and earth"), Confucius *is not worshipped as a god*. This was frankly admitted by Prof. Legge in his later years. "I used to think," he said, "that Confucius in this service received religious worship, and denounced it. But I was wrong. What he received was the homage of gratitude, and not the worship of adoration." "The Religion of China" in *Religious Systems of the World* (8th ed.), p. 72.



Shantung—the modern province which includes the two ancient states just mentioned—as of any other part of the Empire. Practically those rituals are carried out only by the governing classes in their official capacity ; one therefore finds few traces of the personal Confucian cult except in the cities, at the spring and autumn ceremonies held under the auspices of the district-magistrates and higher officials in the *Shêng Miao* or Holy (Confucian) Temples. Such rites, accordingly, have no place in the Territory of Weihaiwei, though they are carried out with all the orthodox ceremonies in the neighbouring cities of Jung-ch'êng, Wên-têng and Ning-hai. Not only is it the case that the officials alone are regarded as competent to carry out the elaborate memorial or semi-religious services connected with the cult of the sage, but to a great extent the same is true in respect of some of the far more ancient rites which are regarded as coming under the head of Confucianism because Confucius “transmitted” them to posterity with his consecrating approval. Such are the biennial sacrifices to Heaven and Earth and to the Land and Grain, and the spring sacrifice at the Altar of Agriculture. The high-priest at these great ceremonies is the Emperor himself, and it is only by his deputies (that is to say the *ti-fang kuan* or territorial officials) that similar rites can be performed in places other than the capital.

Yet it must not be supposed that there is no such thing as Confucianism in China outside the ranks of the official classes. Confucian ideals of life and conduct, Confucian doctrines of the relations between rulers and ruled, Confucian views of the reciprocal rights and duties of parents and children, friends, neighbours, strangers, the Confucian sanction of the cult of Ancestors, these are all strong living forces in the China of to-day. “Wherever Chinamen go,” says Dr. H. A. Giles, “they carry with them in their hearts the two leading features of Confucianism, the

patriarchal system and ancestral worship.”<sup>1</sup> The influx of new light from the West is doubtless bringing about a change in the traditional attitude of the Chinese towards the person of the teacher whom their forefathers have revered for more than two thousand years; but though the Confucian cult conceivably at some future time may be formally disestablished and the Confucian temples turned into technical colleges, it is to be hoped for the sake of China that many centuries will elapse before Confucianism as a moral force, as a guide of life, fades away from the hearts and minds of the people. Confucianism is not a mere code of rules that can be established or abrogated as the fancy takes any prominent statesman who happens to have the ear of the throne; it has intertwined itself with the very roots of the tree of Chinese life, and if that venerable tree, in spite of a mutilated branch or two, is still very far from hopeless decay it is to Confucianism that much of its strength and vigour is due.<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps no teacher of antiquity has suffered more disastrously at the hands of most of his interpreters and translators than has Confucius. Even his Chinese commentators have not always been successful; it is then little to be wondered at that European students, often lacking both a complete equipment of Chinese

<sup>1</sup> *Great Religions of the World: Confucianism*, pp. 28-9. (Harper & Bros., 1901.)

<sup>2</sup> Many missionaries have taken a very different view. Perhaps they are right and the opinions expressed in this chapter erroneous—let me hasten to disclaim any intention to dogmatise. However this may be, I cannot but think that missionaries have not studied, respectfully and tactfully, the susceptibilities of the proud and ancient people whom they wish to proselytise when they hint at the approaching dissolution of their Empire and hold out Christianity to them as a consolation for the loss of their nationality and all that their forefathers have held dear. “Disorganisation,” says Dr. Legge, “will go on to destroy it [China] more and more, and yet there is hope for the people . . . if they will look away from all their ancient sages, and turn to Him, who sends them, *along with the dissolution of their ancient state*, the knowledge of Himself, the only living and true God, and of



scholarship and a power of sympathetic insight into alien modes of thought, and above all possessed by an intensely strong bias against "heathendom" and "heathen" thinkers, have failed again and again to give their fellow-countrymen an adequate account either of the Confucian system as a whole or of the personal character of the Master himself.

Confucius, as one of his most recent English translators reminds us, was one of the most open-minded of men, and approached no subject with "foregone conclusions"; but the whole attitude of the Englishman who is still regarded as the great expounder of Confucianism to the English-speaking world (Dr. Legge) "bespoke one comprehensive and fatal foregone conclusion—the conviction that it must at every point prove inferior to Christianity."<sup>1</sup>

Now what is the impression that Confucianism gives to a European student who is not only a good Chinese scholar and therefore able to dispense with translations, but is also entirely free from religious prejudice?

"The moral teaching of Confucius," says the writer just quoted, "is absolutely the purest and least open to the charge of selfishness of any in the world. . . . 'Virtue for virtue's sake' is the maxim which, if not enunciated by him in so many words, was evidently the

Jesus Christ whom He had sent." Is it to be wondered at that the rulers of China look askance at a foreign religion the God of which intends to send them—however sweetly the bitter pill may be coated—the dissolution of their ancient state? Perhaps there are still missionaries who would give their approval to these extraordinary words, but fortunately there are laymen who take quite a different view of China's "ancient sages" whom Dr. Legge recommends the Chinese to reject. "Never, perhaps, in the history of the human race," says Mr. Lionel Giles, writing of Confucius, "has one man exerted such an enormous influence for good on after-generations." (*The Sayings of Confucius*, p. 118.) Yet this is one of the sages from whom we invite the Chinese to "look away"!

<sup>1</sup> See Mr. L. Giles's Introduction to his translation of *The Sayings of Confucius*, p. 12.

*corner-stone of his ethics and the mainspring of his own career. . . . Virtue resting on anything but its own basis would not have seemed to him virtue in the true sense at all, but simply another name for prudence, foresight, or cunning.*"<sup>1</sup>

I have italicised certain words in this quotation for a reason which will soon be apparent. As is well known, Confucianism and ancestor-worship, as well as Buddhism and Taoism, all established themselves in Japan. Confucianism is said to have entered Japan in the sixth century of our era, though it remained in a stationary position, somewhat inferior in influence to Buddhism, for about a thousand years. But during the last three hundred years at least, "the developed Confucian philosophy," says an authority on Japanese religion,<sup>2</sup> "has been the creed of a majority of the educated men of Japan." Later on he refers to "the prevalence of the Confucian ethics and their universal acceptance by the people of Japan."<sup>3</sup> Of course the Confucian system underwent certain changes in its new island home, as Dr. Griffis is careful to point out,—especially in the direction of emphasising loyalty to sovereign and overlord: but it still remained recognisable Confucianism. Mr. P. Vivian, in a highly interesting volume,<sup>4</sup> mentions the fact that "Confucianism is an agnostic ethical system which the educated classes of Japan have adopted for centuries, and its splendid results are just now much in evidence." Later on he quotes an exceedingly significant and important statement made by the Rev. Henry Scott Jeffreys, a missionary in Japan. "After seven years' residence among this people I wish to place on record my humble testimony to their native virtues. . . . *They love virtue for its own*

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. W. E. Griffis, *The Religions of Japan* (4th ed.), p. 108.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 110.

<sup>4</sup> *The Churches and Modern Thought* (2nd ed.), p. 38.



*sake, and not from fear of punishment or hope of reward."* Could higher praise than this be given to any people on earth? He goes on, "The conversion of this people to the Christian faith is a most complex and perplexing problem, not because they are so bad but because they are so good."<sup>1</sup>

I have italicised the words that are of special interest when considered in connection with the statement already quoted from Mr. Lionel Giles. It is true that the praise given to the Japanese is a great deal too high: there is no nation, whether Christian or non-Christian, that deserves such praise. At the same time most Europeans might find it no easy task to prove to the satisfaction of an intelligent visitor from another planet that the Christian nations are, on the whole, more virtuous than the people of Japan. The European advocate would, of course, lay stress on the alleged weakness of Japanese commercial morality, and perhaps with very good cause. But there is no valid reason for supposing that the Japanese, without Christianity, cannot and will not amend their ways in this respect, and in any case commercial immorality receives no more justification from Confucian than it does from Christian ethics.<sup>2</sup>

But Japan is not China: and if Confucianism be such a good thing, exclaims the wondering European, how is it that China is in a state of decay, that Chinese officials are corrupt, that the population is sodden with opium, that the country is only now, after centuries of sloth and stagnation, beginning to show an interest in Western civilisation and modern science? The real condition of China, or at least

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* pp. 398-9. One is sorely tempted to ask the question, "Then why not leave well alone?"

<sup>2</sup> Prof. H. A. Giles says in a recent publication: "It is beyond question that to the precepts and faithful practice of Confucianism must be attributed the high moral elevation of the Japanese people; an elevation which has enabled them to take an honourable place among the great nations of the world." (*Adversaria Sinica*, p. 202.)

of the Chinese people, is perhaps not so rotten as it is sometimes believed to be, in spite of the grave political and social dangers that at present lie ahead. But waiving this point and admitting that reforms are coming not a day too soon, let us consider one or two of the most obvious causes to which the present state of China may be attributed. China was for many centuries so easily supreme in her own quarter of the globe that a strenuous life became for her unnecessary. Conflict is a law of nature, but owing to peculiar circumstances China as a nation became to a great extent temporarily exempt from that law.<sup>1</sup> She sank into inactivity because it was not necessary for her, as it was and is for the great nations of Europe, to be continually sharpening her wits against those of her neighbours, or to be for ever engaged in the Sisyphean task of redressing "the balance of power." Do the nations of modern Europe sufficiently realise to what extent they owe their progress and civilisation and even their mechanical inventions to the fact that they have all been pitted against each other in a more or less equal struggle for existence in which none has ever succeeded in establishing a supremacy over all the rest? Had powerful and united non-Chinese kingdoms established themselves in the Indo-Chinese peninsula, in India itself, in the plains and mountains of Tibet and Mongolia, in Korea and in mediæval Japan,—kingdoms capable of contending with China on fairly level terms, competent to defend themselves against her attacks yet not strong enough to overcome her,—can it seriously be supposed that China

<sup>1</sup> "It is through conflict alone that the fittest can be selected, because it is through conflict alone that they are afforded the chance of manifesting those qualities, physiological and psychical, which make them the fittest. And, as a matter of fact, conflict is the law of Nature. It is no exaggeration, nor is it a mere figure of speech, to say that progress is accomplished through blood."—CHATTERTON HILL, *Heredity and Selection in Sociology* (A. & C. Black: 1907), p. 355.



would have been politically corrupt, unwarlike and unprogressive to-day?

That unhappy bird the great auk ceased to make use of its wings—perhaps owing to a fatal love for fish—and thereby incurred the punishment that inexorable Nature provides for those who neglect to exercise the faculties she provides them with. Somewhat in the same way China, fatally set at liberty from the invigorating impetus of competition, seems to have lost the use of those powers and qualities which ages ago carried her to the apex of the Asiatic world. Unlike the great auk, however, China has not yet become extinct, nor indeed is extinction likely to be her fate. To take an illustration of a very different kind, is it not the case that many a successful and energetic man of business is only saved from yielding to the insidious habit of taking afternoon naps by the incessant ringing of his telephone-bell? For ages China could count on undisturbed slumber whenever she required it—and it must be admitted that she seemed to require it long and often. The telephone-bell has now been ringing her up continuously for some little time; she ignored it at first, or perhaps it only gave a new colour to her dreams, or occasionally turned them into nightmares; but now she has risen, slowly and unwillingly it may be, and has put the receiver to her ear. She has taken down the messages sent her, and she is beginning to understand them; and among other things she is realising that afternoon slumbers for her are joys of the past.

If China thinks, or Europe persuades her into the belief, that her backward position among the great Powers of the world is due to Confucianism, she will be doing a great wrong to the memory of one of her greatest sons and a greater wrong to herself.<sup>1</sup> It

<sup>1</sup> "We think that Confucius cut the tap-root of all true progress, and therefore is largely responsible for the arrested development of China." (Griffis, *The Religions of Japan* (4th ed.), pp. 104-5.) See also the

would be just as reasonable to make the Founder of Christianity, one of the most gracious and most pitiful of men, responsible for the injustice and cruelty of the Crusades or for the frightful atrocities practised in Europe on the bodies of heretics, or for such priestly and monkish abuses as the sale of "pardons" and the traffic in saintly relics and fragments of the "True Cross"; indeed it would perhaps be rather more reasonable, for the mediæval popes and monks at least professed to act in the name of their Lord, whereas it is not in the name of Confucius that offices in China are bought and sold or that Chinese magistrates take bribes and "squeezes," or that the naval and military defences of the country have been allowed to fall into decay. Does any one in Europe now suppose that if Christ had returned to earth in the Middle Ages He would have accepted a seat beside the Grand In-

Lectures delivered by Mr. E. R. Bernard in Salisbury Cathedral in 1903-4. The latter says, "Now that we have concluded our survey of Confucius's work and system, I should like to draw your attention to a practical inference from the results attained by it. *The results are the condition of Chinese society at the present day with its strange mixture of benevolence and cruelty, industry and fraud, domestic virtues and impurity.* And the inference is the small value of an elevated system of ethics without religion, for of religion there is nothing in the 'Analects' from beginning to end." (The italics are mine.) One might almost suppose from this that in Christian England there is no cruelty, no fraud, no impurity. If a Chinese were to go to England and declare that the vices of the country were the results of Christianity he would probably be anathematised as a wicked blasphemer and hounded out of the land; why should the Western nations show surprise if the Chinese are indignant with foreigners who use words which in their obvious and natural sense would lead the world to suppose that the cases of cruelty, fraud and impurity one meets with in China are the result of Confucianism! As an offset to the dictum of Mr. Bernard (who I gather has never been in China) I quote the opinion of one who has made China and the Chinese his lifelong study. "The cardinal virtues which are most admired by Christians are fully inculcated in the Confucian canon, and the general practice of these is certainly up to the average standard exhibited by foreign nations." (*Religions of the World*, pp. 26-7: "Confucianism," by Prof. H. A. Giles.)



quisitors and joined them in sentencing innocent men and women "to the thumbscrew and the stake, for the glory of the Lord"? Or that if He had appeared in England in 1646 He would have supported the Act which made it a capital offence to deny the truth of any of the dogmas that the English Church of that period chose to consider essential?

This is how a papal legate in 1209 wrote to Innocent III. after a victorious crusade against the Albigenses: "Our troops, sparing neither sex nor age, put to the sword nearly twenty thousand; splendid deeds were accomplished in the overthrow of the enemy, the whole city was sacked and burned by a divine revenge marvellous fierce." A pope may have taken this doughty champion of the Church to his bosom, but is it conceivable that the Carpenter of Nazareth would have greeted this monster, whose sword was reeking with human blood, with the welcoming words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant"? If we refuse, as we well may, to lay on Jesus the least tittle of responsibility for the terrible crimes perpetrated in Europe for many consecutive centuries in the name of the Christian religion, would it not be becoming on our part to hesitate before we ascribe the faults and disasters of the Chinese people and their Government wholly or even partially to their faith in the teachings of Confucius?

I once heard a kind-hearted Englishman say that he could forgive China all her faults except the torturing of prisoners in the law-courts and in the gaols. Torture in China—which is very slowly becoming obsolete—has very naturally made Europeans shudder with horror: but where does Confucius give countenance to torture? And after all, the extent of China's crime is only this, that she has not abolished the practice of torture quite so early as the nations of Western Europe and America. Perhaps the missionaries and others who have pointed out to the Chinese the enormity of their crime in permitting torture have

sometimes omitted to state that only in comparatively recent times have we ourselves become so merciful as to forbid the practice. Without dwelling on the abominable punishments devised for heretical offenders in every country in Europe, it is as well to remember that torture was continually inflicted in England during the Tudor reigns,<sup>1</sup> and also under the Stuarts. In Scotland it was long a recognised part of criminal procedure, and was not finally abolished in that country till the eighteenth century.<sup>2</sup> The Most High and Mighty Prince whose name adorns the front page of our English Bibles, in one memorable case directed the application, if necessary, of "the most severe" tortures, and expressed the devout wish that the Almighty would "speed the good work."

When confronted with so lofty an ethical system as that taught by Confucius, European writers who wish to prove the justice of their contention that "it must at every point prove inferior to Christianity" are naturally driven to make the utmost of any passage in the Chinese classics that appears to reveal something of the Chinese sage's moral imperfections. Just as an anti-foreign Chinese commentator on the Christian religion might utilise certain texts in the Old Testament to show that the Christian God was neither just nor merciful, and certain texts in the New Testament to show that Jesus of Nazareth shared the superstitions of his age and was sometimes lacking in self-control, so European expounders of Confucianism have seized upon a few passages in the Confucian canon to prove to their own satisfaction that the great Sage of China did not always speak the truth. The passages are three in number. In one we are told that a certain brave man was commended by the Master for his absence of boastfulness, because though he nobly brought up the rear during a retreat,

<sup>1</sup> As Hallam says, "The rack seldom stood idle in the Tower for all the latter part of Elizabeth's reign."

<sup>2</sup> By an Act passed in the seventh year of Queen Anne.



he said, "It is not courage that makes me last, it is my horse that won't gallop fast enough."<sup>1</sup> As courage really was the cause of his conduct, Prof. Legge and those who think with him take the view that the man's own explanation of what he had done was untruthful and that Confucius by awarding him praise condoned a lie. Considering that Confucius's only remark on the subject was that the man was no braggart, probably few of us except sanctimonious pedants would say that either the sage or his hero was guilty of an act or a word that was in any way discreditable.

In another famous passage it is narrated that "A man who wanted to see Confucius called on him. Confucius, not wishing to see him, sent to say he was sick. When the servant with the message went to the door, Confucius took up his musical instrument and sang aloud purposely to let the visitor hear it and know that he was not really sick."<sup>2</sup> It is interesting to note that in citing this little story as evidence of Confucius's lack of veracity, Prof. Legge omits to quote the second part of the passage,<sup>3</sup> though it ought to be obvious to the most casual reader that it was only for the sake of the remark about the music that the story was preserved in the Confucian canon at all. So far from proving that Confucius could tell a lie, it goes to show that even in small matters of everyday social intercourse Confucius's nature was superior to all the little "white lies" and deceptions that are and no doubt always have been continually practised in "Society." Probably in his day, as in our own, it was considered more polite to an unwelcome visitor to plead indisposition or absence from home as an excuse for not admitting him than to send him the blunt message, "You are not wanted: go away!" Confucius, however, wishing to make it quite clear to his visitor that the plea of

<sup>1</sup> Mr. L. Giles's translation of *Lun Yü*, vi. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Ku Hung-ming's translation of *Lun Yü*, xvii. 20.

<sup>3</sup> See Legge's *Chinese Classics* (2nd. ed.), vol. i. p. 100.

sickness was merely a social subterfuge and was not intended to deceive (as a lie must surely be), took up his musical instrument and played it in his visitor's hearing.

So far from this passage proving that Confucius had an inadequate regard for the truth, it will perhaps strike a good many people as indicating that untruth and insincerity were abhorrent to Confucius's nature: and this was undoubtedly the impression that the disciple who remembered and recorded the incident wished to convey.

So much for two out of the three solitary occasions on which Confucius is said to have laid himself open to what Prof. Legge calls "the most serious charge that can be brought against him, the charge of insincerity." The events recorded in connection with the third occasion are much more grave and deserve closer attention. The story goes that Confucius when travelling to a place called Wei was captured by a rebel-brigand of that state, who would only release him on condition that he would take an oath to give up his proposed expedition to Wei. Confucius took the oath, and on his release forthwith continued his journey to the place he had sworn to avoid. On one of his disciples asking him whether it was a right thing to break his word, Confucius replied: "It was a forced oath. The spirits do not hear such." Now of the moral question here involved Sir Robert Douglas takes the view that it is "a nice question for casuists," but expresses the conviction that by most people Confucius "will not be held to be very blameworthy for that which, at the worst, was a mistaken notion of truthfulness."<sup>1</sup> On the other hand many of us will hold the equally strong conviction that if this story is true there is an ugly blot on the character of Confucius. If he deliberately and knowingly broke his word, as this story would indicate, then he was no gentleman.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sir Robert Douglas, *Confucianism and Taouism* (5th ed.), p. 146.

<sup>2</sup> This would certainly have been Montaigne's view. See, for a very apposite passage, *Essays*, Bk. iii. ch. i.



*Le bon sang ne peut mentir*, as the old French proverb says. Not his can have been what Burke in thrilling words calls "that chastity of honour, which felt a stain like a wound." But the evidence from other sources that Confucius was a gentleman—a man to whom truth and sincerity were very precious—is overwhelming. His teachings and actions, so far as we know them—all but this one—prove conclusively that he laid almost greater emphasis on truth and honour than on any other quality. "Hold faithfulness and sincerity," he said, "as first principles."<sup>1</sup> One of his English commentators remarks that "the earnestness with which he insists on this, repeating the same injunction over and over again, is a point in his teaching which is well worthy of admiration."<sup>2</sup>

How then is this strange story of the broken oath to be explained? Probably by the simple statement that the story is not true. The incident is one which finds no place in the accepted Confucian canon: as Prof. H. A. Giles says, it "occurs in an admittedly spurious work,"<sup>3</sup>—namely the *Chia Yü*, which in its present form is believed to have been composed in the third century A.D. The only other authority for it is the great historian Ssü-ma Ch'ien. Confucius was born in 551 B.C., Ssü-ma Ch'ien no less than four hundred years later. It may, doubtless, be urged by those who believe in the story and wish at the same time to save the honour of Confucius, that the standard of truth at that time was very low and that Confucius was only acting in accordance with the practice of the age in breaking his plighted word. But we have no reason whatever to suppose that the standard was

<sup>1</sup> This is Legge's translation of *Lun Yü* i. 8. The doctrine is repeated in ix. 24. Cf. also *Lun Yü* ii. 22 and many other passages in this and other Confucian books.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Robert Douglas, *op. cit.* p. 114.

<sup>3</sup> "Confucianism," in *Great Religions of the World*, p. 26. See also Prof. Giles's *Chinese Literature*, p. 48, and Wylie's *Notes on Chinese Literature* (1902 ed.), p. 82.

any lower than it is to-day in Christendom: and what no writer, so far as I am aware, seems to have made a note of is the important fact that the story, if true at all, is of itself a clear proof that the standard of honour was remarkably high. The rebel would not have given Confucius the option of taking an oath unless there had been an expectation on his part that Confucius would keep that oath; and if the expectation existed, it must even in those far-off days have been founded on a belief that a gentleman's word was "as good as his bond." Thus if we believe in the story we are compelled to adopt the conclusion that Confucius was not, as one would have thought, superior to his contemporaries in matters of morals, but was immeasurably their inferior: a conclusion which is patently absurd. To suppose after hearing the evidence of the canonical books that Confucius was a man who could deliberately break his word seems almost as unreasonable as to suppose that Sir Walter Scott ("true gentleman, heart, blood and bone," as Tennyson called him) could have acted dishonourably or that Sir Philip Sidney, the prince of chivalry, could have told a lie.

I cannot hope that these remarks will re-establish Confucius's reputation as a lover of truth in the minds of those who wish for proselytising purposes to convince the Chinese that their sage was a grievous sinner. Such persons will doubtless in any case continue to hold that the Chinese as a people are untruthful, and that whether or not the untruthfulness is a legacy left them by Confucius it is a vice which only Christianity can extirpate. This question of Chinese untruthfulness we have already considered,<sup>1</sup> and a few words are all that is necessary here.

Persons who believe that the untruthfulness of the Chinese (presuming that it exists) is due to their "heathenism" and that truth is a typically or exclusively Christian virtue may have some difficulty in

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 108 *seq.*





WEIHAIVEI VILLAGERS (see p. 315).

p. 314]



SHEN-TZŪ (MULE-LITTER) FORDING A STREAM (see p. 17).





proving the justice of their view. "We have proof in the Bible," as Herbert Spencer remarks, "that apart from the lying which constituted false witness, and was to the injury of a neighbour, there was among the Hebrews but little reprobation of lying."<sup>1</sup> He goes on to admit, very properly, that in the writings of the Hebrew prophets and in parts of the New Testament lying is strongly condemned. Missionaries often say that the Chinese will never become a truthful people until they become a Christian people. If truthfulness had been an unknown virtue until Christianity appeared, one might perhaps be unable to question the accuracy of this statement. But what does Herodotus, writing in the fourth century B.C., tell us about the Persians of his day? "They educate their children, beginning at five years old and going on till twenty, in three things only, in riding, in shooting, and in speaking the truth . . . and the most disgraceful thing in their estimation is to tell a lie."<sup>2</sup>

And would not most of us trust the word of Socrates, if we had the chance, as fully as we would trust the word of an archbishop? If truthfulness is a characteristically Christian virtue, how was it that in the Merovingian period "oaths taken by rulers, even with their hands on the altar, were forthwith broken"?<sup>3</sup> And what are we to say of the alleged Jesuitical doctrine that the end justifies the means, or about that immoral dogma of the Decretals (surely just as bad as Confucius's supposed doctrine regarding forced oaths): *Juramentum contra utilitatem ecclesiasticam praestitum non tenet*?

<sup>1</sup> *Principles of Ethics*, i. 402. Herbert Spencer goes on to refer to 1 Kings xxii. 22, Ezekiel xiv. 9, Genesis xxvi. 12, and also to the Jacob and Esau incident and to the occasion "when Jeremiah tells a falsehood at the king's suggestion." The Rev. A. W. Oxford, writing on ancient Judaism, reminds us that "Jehovah protects Abraham and Isaac after they have told lies, and punishes the innocent foreigner." *Religious Systems of the World* (8th ed.), p. 60.

<sup>2</sup> *Herodotus*, translated by G. C. Macaulay, vol. i. pp. 69-70.

<sup>3</sup> Herbert Spencer, *op. cit.* vol. i. pp. 403-4.

There are non-Christian peoples in southern India to-day of whom it has been said that they are characterised by "complete truthfulness. They do not know how to tell a lie"; in central India certain aborigines are described as "the most truthful of beings."<sup>1</sup> But the list might be indefinitely extended. There are numerous races in the world among whom truth is held in the highest honour, and as many others who appear to regard a skilful liar as a specially clever fellow. There is certainly very little reason to believe that truth is a monopoly of the Christian or that the "heathen" is necessarily a liar.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Both cases are cited by Herbert Spencer, *op. cit.* p. 405. That philosopher argues that "it is the presence or absence of despotic rule which leads to prevalent falsehood or prevalent truth."

<sup>2</sup> Prof. Legge evidently took the view that truthfulness belonged only to Christians. He states that a love of truth can only be maintained, and a lie shrunk from with shame, through "the living recognition of a God of truth, and all the sanctions of revealed religion." (*Chinese Classics*, vol. i. p. 101.) By "revealed religion" Legge means, of course, Christianity. It would be interesting to know how he would have accounted for truthfulness among numerous non-Christian races of our own time or among such people as the ancient Persians. Perhaps as regards the latter case he would have done it by denying the capacity of a Greek (especially of a Greek who has been described as the "father of lies") to judge of truthfulness! Prof. Martin in *The Lore of Cathay* (p. 177) says that while Confucius's writings (presumably he means his recorded sayings) "abound in the praise of virtue, not a line can be found inculcating the pursuit of truth." This is an amazing misstatement: let us hope it was written inadvertently. A third missionary, Dr. Wells Williams, makes statements regarding the character and morals of the Chinese people that are so grossly unfair as to be almost unreadable [*Middle Kingdom*, vol. i. pp. 833-6 (1883 edition)]. Mr. Arthur Davenport in his *China from Within* (T. Fisher Unwin, 1904) quotes from a missionary's letter which appeared in *China's Millions* (a missionary publication) in February 1903. "What a mass of evil the missionary in China has to contend with! . . . Certainly there are more souls being lost every day in China than in any country in the world . . . the Bible declares that no liar or idolater can ever reach heaven, and all these masses of people are idolaters and liars; for 'China is a nation of liars,' consequently there must be among the lost, among those going to eternal death, a greater number from the Chinese than from any nation on earth. . . . For though they be all liars and idolaters, they are the most industrious



The average Englishman or American does not always find that his pious acquaintances are the most truthful:<sup>1</sup> indeed in many cases he will prefer to trust the word of a man who from the Church's point of view is a notorious sinner but who happens at the same time to be a gentleman. It is of course easy to declare that a Christian who tells a lie cannot be a true Christian. It is equally easy and equally just to assert that the native of China who tells a lie cannot be a true Confucian.

If in Weihaiwei as elsewhere in rural China the influence of Confucius is to be traced not in temples and religious or commemorative ceremonial but in the customs, manners and character of the people, it is clear that a description of the Confucianism of this corner of the Empire would involve a repetition of much that has been already set forth at length in the course of the foregoing pages. But there is a feature of Confucianism that so far has been

of people, and of such intellectual capacity as to be able to compete for the highest scholarships in the Universities of Europe and America. . . . We thank God with all our heart that there are now so many different Protestant Missions at work in Chehkiang, each having godly, earnest, and faithful men representing them." No wonder Mr. Davenport, after quoting this astonishing effusion, remarks that "this rendering of thanks to God that there are now so many 'godly, earnest, and faithful' foreign missionaries amongst this 'nation of liars' forcibly reminds us of the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican." It is pitiful to think that missionaries of the class to which the writer of this letter belongs are still at work in China, "converting the heathen." Let us hope that the day may come when the generous-hearted people who support Foreign Missions with their money and services will feel justified in insisting that educated gentlemen, and no others, are selected for work in the Mission field. Fortunately the Mission Boards appear to be exercising much greater care in their selection of missionaries for China than they did formerly; but how can they undo the harm that has already been done?

<sup>1</sup> "A Highlander, who considered himself a devout Christian, is reported to have said of an acquaintance: 'Donald's a rogue, and a cheat, and a villain, and a liar; but he's a good, pious man.' Probably Donald 'kept the Sabbath—and everything else he could lay his hands on.'"—D. G. RITCHIE, *Natural Rights* (2nd ed.), p. 190.

treated less thoroughly than it deserves, although it constitutes by far the most important element in the religious life of the people. This is the cult of Ancestors.

There is perhaps a popular tendency in Europe (notwithstanding the doctrines of Herbert Spencer) to regard this cult as something peculiar to the Far East and without parallel in Western modes of religious thought and practice: but, as students of comparative religion well know, such is not the case. That ancestor-worship or something very like it existed among the ancient Egyptians might be assumed from the extraordinary measures which they took to preserve the bodies of the dead: but we know from other evidence that the ancestral Ghost was regularly approached with veneration and sacrifices. Cakes and other articles were offered to the Egyptian *ka* just as they are offered to the spirits of the dead in China to-day; and, as in China, the sacrificial ceremonies were made the occasion of family gatherings and genial festivities.<sup>1</sup> Great religious revolutions have taken place in Egypt in the course of ages, but among the Egyptian Mohammedans and the Copts traces of ancestor-worship exist to this day. The evidence at present available hardly justifies us in declaring that this cult was also practised in Babylonia, though it seems at least certain that heroes and distinguished men were deified and venerated. There is less doubt

<sup>1</sup> The parallels between Egyptian and Chinese culture are not perhaps very numerous or instructive; it may therefore be worth while to mention one that is not without interest though it is doubtless accidental. The Milky Way in Egypt was known as the Heavenly Nile: in China it is named the Heavenly River (*T'ien Ho*). It would perhaps be correct to translate the Chinese *ho* in this case as "Yellow River": for when the word *ho* (river) is spoken of without qualification it is the Yellow River (near the banks of which most of the old Chinese capitals were situated) that is understood. With the phrases Heavenly Nile and Heavenly Yellow River may be compared an old English name for the Milky Way—Watling Street. (See A. Lang's *Custom and Myth* [1901 ed.], p. 122.)



about the early Israelites. "It is impossible to avoid the conclusion," says the Rev. A. W. Oxford,<sup>1</sup> "that the pre-Jehovistic worship was that of ancestors." He observes that "the importance attached to a father's blessing before his death and the great fear caused by a curse (Judges xvii. 2) were relics of the old cult of ancestors."

The importance of the same cult in Greece and Rome can hardly be exaggerated. In Greece, Zeus himself was regarded in one of his aspects as *πατρῶς*, the ancestral god. "The central point of old Roman religion," as Grant Allen has said,<sup>2</sup> "was clearly the household; the family ghosts or *lares* were the most honoured gods." In various parts of the "Dark Continent" ancestor-worship is the prevailing religion. "Nowhere," says Max Müller, "is a belief and a worship of ancestral spirits so widely spread as in Africa."<sup>3</sup> That it existed and still exists in many Eastern countries besides China need hardly be emphasised. It is deeply embedded in Hinduism, and in Japan it has grafted itself on Shinto.<sup>4</sup>

It is perhaps of greater interest to Europeans to know that the cult of ancestors existed in pre-Christian days in the forests of old Germany. "Our early Teutonic forefathers," says Mr. F. York Powell, "worshipped the dead and treated their deceased

<sup>1</sup> See article on Judaism in *The Religious Systems of the World* (Sonnenschein & Co. 8th ed.), p. 56.

<sup>2</sup> *The Evolution of the Idea of God*, pp. 369-70. See also Tylor, *Primitive Culture* (4th ed.), vol. ii. 120; Fustel de Coulanges, *La Cité Antique*; and T. R. Glover's *Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire*, pp. 14-15.

<sup>3</sup> *Last Essays*, Second Series (1901 ed.), p. 45.

<sup>4</sup> Ancestor-worship has been called "the foundation and chief characteristic of Shinto" (D. Goh in *Religious Systems of the World*, 8th ed., p. 99); but though this is the statement of a scholarly native of Japan, it is as well to observe that Dr. Aston, one of the best European authorities on the subject, holds a somewhat different view as to the connection between Shinto (in its earliest form) and the cult of ancestors. "All the great deities of the older Shinto," he says, "are not Man but Nature gods." (*Shinto*, p. 9.)

ancestors as gods.”<sup>1</sup> But old customs, especially religious ones, die hard; and so we need not be surprised to find that just as the Isis and Horus of the ancient Egyptians have become the Madonna and Child of the modern Italians,<sup>2</sup> so the ancestor-worship of our Teutonic forefathers has been transformed under Christian influences into solemn commemorations of the dead, and masses for the souls of the “faithful departed.” The transformation, indeed, is in some places hardly complete to this day.

“Although full ancestor-worship,” says Dr. Tylor, “is not practised in modern Christendom, there remains even now within its limits a well-marked worship of the dead. A crowd of saints, who were once men and women, now form an order of inferior deities, active in the affairs of men, and receiving from them reverence and prayer, thus coming strictly under the definition of manes. This Christian cultus of the dead, belonging in principle to the older manes worship, was adapted to answer another purpose in the course of religious transition in Europe.”<sup>3</sup>

It appears that in one part of Christendom, at least, actual ancestor-worship is not yet extinct. In backward parts of Russia at this day, we are told, “the dead in return for the offerings are supplicated to guard and foster the family and crops. ‘Ye spirits of

<sup>1</sup> “Teutonic Heathendom,” in *Religious Systems of the World* (8th ed.), p. 279.

<sup>2</sup> See T. R. Glover’s *Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire*, p. 23. See also F. C. Conybeare’s admirable work *Myth, Magic, and Morals*, in which he says, “Latin hymns in honour of Isis seem to have been appropriated to Mary with little change; and I have seen statues of Isis set up in Christian churches as images of the Virgin” (p. 230). He also points out that in Asia Minor “the Virgin took the place of Cybele and Artemis.”

<sup>3</sup> *Primitive Culture* (4th ed.), vol. ii. pp. 120 seq. See also vol. i. pp. 96–7 for mention of vestiges of sacrificial ceremonies in England in honour of the dead. With reference to the gradual transformation of the old Roman feasts for the dead into festivals of the Christian martyrs, see T. R. Glover’s *Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire*, pp. 15–16.



the long departed, guard and preserve us well. Make none of us cripples. Send no plagues upon us. Cause the corn, the wine, and the food to prosper with us.'"<sup>1</sup> Evidently if ancestor-worship is idolatrous, Europe is not without its idolatry even in this twentieth century.

The Ancestral cult, as every one knows, received the hall-mark of Confucius's approval, though Confucius himself did not profess to be a theologian or to speak with authority on matters spiritual. It is an extraordinary thing that Confucius's reticence with regard to these matters has been selected by Christian missionaries as a subject for special reproach. Prof. Legge, after quoting some of Confucius's utterances on the subject of the unseen world, asks why he did not "candidly tell his real thoughts on so interesting a subject,"<sup>2</sup> and exclaims "Surely this was not the teaching proper to a sage." Elsewhere he solves this question himself, for he decides that Confucius was no sage.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately he does not define the word Sage, though he seems to imply that the word can be fittingly applied only to a Christian teacher. He did not perhaps quite appreciate the significance of the Horatian remark *Vixere fortes ante Agamemnona*.

Meadows remarks that every consistent Confucianist ought to be a blank atheist, though probably he is using the word in the sense that used erroneously to be attached to it a good many years ago,<sup>4</sup> when "atheist" was the term applied to all persons who were outside the Christian fold. In that sense Confucius was an atheist, and inasmuch as he lived half a millennium before Christ was born it is obvious that he could not possibly have been anything else. Mr. Arthur H. Smith states that the mass of Con-

<sup>1</sup> Dr. L. R. Farnell in *Hibbert Journal*, January 1909, p. 426.

<sup>2</sup> *Chinese Classics*, vol. i. (2nd ed.), p. 100.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* vol. iii. pt. i. p. 200.

<sup>4</sup> See Max Müller's *Lectures on the Origin of Religion* (1901 ed.), pp. 310-16.

fucian scholars are "thoroughly agnostic and atheistic,"<sup>1</sup> though if these terms are correctly used it is difficult to see how they could be both at the same time. Mr. W. E. Griffis thinks it "more than probable" that Confucius laid "unnecessary emphasis upon social and political duties, and may not have been sufficiently interested in the honour to be paid to Shang Ti or God. He practically ignored the Godward side of men's duties."<sup>2</sup> Confucius would probably have said that if people fully and completely discharge all their duties on the manward side they need have no fear that they are neglecting the Godward side. Griffis goes on to compare Confucianism with a child-headed giant, because it is exaggerated on its moral and ceremonial side as compared with its spiritual development. It must surely be clear to an unprejudiced mind that Confucius deserves no blame whatever for omitting to lay down the law on subjects about which he never professed to know anything. Men have existed on this planet for tens of thousands of years: if, as many occidental peoples hold, the Deity revealed Himself only nineteen centuries ago, it is absurd to find fault with an honest philosopher for not having known facts which had been preserved as a secret in the archives of heaven for countless ages in the past and were to remain undisclosed for another five hundred years in the future. Some of us, perhaps, may be inclined to the opinion that the great secret remains a secret still. "We are born to enquire after truth," said the wise Montaigne; "it belongs to a greater power to possess it." But supposing for the sake of argument that Truth, or a certain aspect of Truth, came to man's knowledge by a miraculous act on the part of a Divine Power nineteen centuries ago, one cannot blame Confucius for not having obtained it from heaven five hundred years sooner. One might as well blame St. Paul for not anticipating

<sup>1</sup> *Chinese Characteristics* (5th ed.), p. 293.

<sup>2</sup> *The Religions of Japan* (4th ed.), p. 104.



the astronomical discoveries of Copernicus and Galileo, or St. Augustine for not telling us how to deal with the modern Women's Suffrage problem, or the Founder of Christianity Himself for not explaining the mechanism of motor-omnibuses and aeroplanes. Prometheus is said to have succeeded in wrenching a valuable secret from heaven without divine permission, but Prometheus was a Titan and Confucius never pretended to be anything more than a humble-minded man.

The remarks made both orally and in writing on the subject of Confucius and his religious views are often so framed as to convey the idea, either that he was somehow to blame for his want of knowledge, or that he really knew all the time about God and other spiritual beings, but was deliberately and wickedly keeping the knowledge up his sleeve. It is presumably for this reason that some missionaries have found it their painful duty to explain to the Chinese (whom they are trying to convert to a belief in a merciful and loving Deity) that Confucius is now writhing in hell.<sup>1</sup> It is open to them to add that good Chinese Christians may look forward to the happy day when they, from their heavenly mansions, may behold their national Sage undergoing the tortures prescribed for him in the nethermost regions: for was it not Tertullian who, perhaps in a spirit of irony or mockery, declared<sup>2</sup> that one of the joys of the blessed when they reach heaven will be to watch the torments of the damned?<sup>3</sup> Fortunately bigotry and intolerance

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 353-4.

<sup>2</sup> *De Speculis*, 30.

<sup>3</sup> In nothing have we moved away from the pious savagery of a former age more noticeably than in the average Christian's attitude towards hell. "I don't believe in hell," is a very common observation nowadays even on the part of those who assert themselves to be good Christians, though surely from the Church's point of view the position is a highly heretical one. Modern humanitarianism is gradually teaching the "plain man" to see that if a heaven exists, and if human souls are to attain to a condition of perfect happiness there, it is inconceivable

of this kind are (thanks partly to secular pressure) rapidly disappearing from Christian apologetics, but the charge against Confucius that his views on spiritual matters were not only unsound but were also discreditable to himself and to those who followed his teachings, is still occasionally heard in the missionary camp.

It is perhaps worth while to consider briefly what those views were. They are not to be found in any consecutive form; all one can do is to pick up hints here and there and piece them together as best one may. It must be remembered that Confucius seems very rarely to have offered any remarks on spiritual matters on his own initiative: he did not profess to be an authority on such subjects, and it was only in answer to direct questions that he said anything at all. His attitude may be compared with that of Mohammed, who administered rebukes to his disciples when he heard them debating about fate and destiny. Such things, he taught, were beyond all human know-

that there can be a hell also: for whatever the Christians of Tertullian's day may have deemed necessary to happiness, few if any of us in modern times could possibly (without undergoing a fundamental change of character) attain complete happiness while in possession of the knowledge that certain of our fellow human-beings were undergoing eternal torment. The fact that we could ourselves behold the tormented ones in their misery, so far from being an added source of pleasure would surely turn our heavenly joys into dust and ashes. We cannot be perfectly happy, as Prof. William James has remarked, so long as we know that a single human soul is suffering pain. In a book entitled *The Future Life and Modern Difficulties*, the Rev. F. C. Kempson "does not hesitate to defend the belief that there are souls which are finally lost, although he deprecates any materialistic presentation of that state of loss." As his critic in the *Church Quarterly Review* (April 1909, p. 200) sensibly points out, Mr. Kempson "does not fully appreciate the depth of the objections against such a doctrine. To many minds, not generally supposed to be tainted with sentimentality, it appears that a universe where there was an ultimate loss of souls through the complete determination of the will towards evil would be an essentially atheistic universe, for it would be one in which the evil was in the end partially triumphant over the good."



ledge. If one might presume to construct a kind of paraphrase of Confucius's occasional utterances on spiritual subjects, and put it in the form of a continuous discourse, it might perhaps run somewhat as follows :

“ You need not ask me about the gods and spirits or the world beyond the grave, because I really cannot tell you anything about them. You ask me what death is. I do not know. I think it will be time enough to consider the problems of death when we have solved those presented by life : and it will be a long time before we have done that.<sup>1</sup> You ask me about serving the dead. First make sure that you are doing everything possible in the service of living men, then you may consider, if you will, whether any changes should be made in our ancestral modes of serving the spirits of the dead. You ask if the departed have any knowledge of the sacrifices we offer them, or if they are totally unconscious of what we are doing for them. How can I answer you ? If I were to tell you that the dead are conscious, you might waste your substance in funerals and sacrifices, and thus neglect the living to pay court to the dead. If on the other hand I were to tell you that the dead are unconscious, filial piety might diminish and sons begin to leave the bodies of their parents uncared for and unburied. Seek not to know whether the departed are indeed conscious. If they are, you will know it some day ; meanwhile study the world you live in and have no fear that you will exhaust its treasures of knowledge : the world takes a lot of knowing. What is the use of my giving you my personal opinion about death and spiritual beings ? You, or others less intelligent than you, might take my opinions as definite statements of truth, and if they happen to be erroneous opinions I might very properly be charged with the propagation of error. It is the custom of our race to offer sacrifices to the spirits of

<sup>1</sup> “ I don't know about the unseen world,” said Thackeray in one of his letters, “ the use of the seen world is the right thing I'm sure. It is as much God's world and creation as the kingdom of heaven with all its angels.”

the dead and I consider this a good old custom and one that ought to be kept up, because even if there are no spirits to receive our homage the practice is in itself a harmless one and helps to foster reverence for one's elders and for those in authority. Therefore I say to you, carry out the solemn sacrifices to which you have been accustomed, and when you do so, honour the spirits as if they were present,<sup>1</sup> but do not be so foolish as to attempt familiar intercourse with them. It was not we who made the chasm that lies between ourselves and the spiritual world, nor have we any right (so far as we know) to try to bridge that chasm. God—if there be a God—knows why the chasm is there, and God can bridge it if He will.

“ My advice to you is this. Be zealous in the services you owe to your fellow-men ; behave towards them as you would wish them to behave towards yourself. Be not too proud to admit when you are wrong or that you ‘do not know.’ The man who sees what is right and honest and dares not do it is a craven. Do not repine if you are misunderstood by men ; repine rather that there are men who are misunderstood by you. Choose as your familiar companions only those who are at least equal to yourself in virtue. Speak and act with sincerity and truth. Be true to yourself and charitable towards your neighbour. Carry out those rites of filial piety and of religious worship that have been handed down to you by your fathers, even if you have doubts about the nature or even the very existence of the objects of your worship ; there is nothing to be ashamed of in honest doubt, but do not let doubts interfere with your duty. Let not your knowledge and practice of the traditional rituals mislead you into thinking that you are on intimate terms with the spiritual world ; treat the unseen Powers with all reverence but keep aloof from them. Do not fear that God will hold you guilty of neglect of heavenly things provided you neglect nothing of the duties you owe to men.”

<sup>1</sup> In some respects, it may be noted, Confucius's position is not very far removed from that of some of the so-called Modernists of our own time. Cf. Le Roy, *Dogme et Critique* (4th ed.), p. 26 ; and the late Father Tyrrell's *Lex Orandi*.



It is true that several remarks of Confucius are on record which seem to indicate that he had a belief—however indefinite—in the existence of a God or at least of spiritual beings who were both greater and better than men. For instance he is said to have remarked that men had failed to understand him, adding proudly, “But there is Heaven: THAT knows me!” There is also the famous reply which he gave to Tzū-lu on the subject of prayer: “My praying,” said Confucius, “has been for a long time.”<sup>1</sup> Some English translators incline to the opinion that according to this remark Confucius really did offer up prayers to an unseen Power. What one knows of Confucius’s life and teachings as well as the context of this particular passage makes this highly improbable; and indeed the remark loses most of its beauty and dignity if Confucius referred merely to prayers in the ordinary sense. As one of his English editors says, “his whole life had been one long prayer”<sup>2</sup>—in a sense that the narrow religious pedant perhaps does not and cannot understand. One is reminded of the landscape-painter who scandalised the pious natives of a beautiful Welsh village by painting on Sundays. “How is it,” asked the local parson reproachfully, “that we have not yet seen you in God’s house?” “I am not aware,” was the artist’s quiet reply, “that I was ever out of it.” Those of us who can respect this answer will be able to respect that given by Confucius when he said, “My praying has been for a long time.”

<sup>1</sup> *Lun Yü*, vii. 34.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. L. Giles, *The Sayings of Confucius*, p. 87.

## CHAPTER XIV

### CONFUCIANISM—II

PERSONS whose religion is bounded by dogmas and rituals, and who take such a dismal view of human nature that they cannot conceive of the existence of moral goodness apart from faith in a particular creed, are always (consciously or unconsciously) on the look-out for evidences of "sin" or imperfection or human frailty in the doctrines of those who are ethical rather than religious teachers, and who do not profess to have been favoured with a "divine revelation." Some of the failings ascribed to Confucius—such as his alleged insincerity—have been already dealt with; but if his Christian critics are unable to substantiate their charges of moral depravity they are on much firmer ground when they declare that Confucianism is not a religion at all, but merely (though why "merely"?) a system of morals. This is a point which every one will decide for himself in accordance with his own views of what constitutes Religion. Cardinal Newman said that by Religion he meant "the knowledge of God, of His Will, of our duties towards Him." According to this definition Confucianism can hardly be called a Religion. Carlyle said that whoever believes in the infinite nature of Duty has religion. If this be so, it may after all be argued that a religion is possessed by the true Confucian. Legge, who admired Confucius



as "a very great man," but was prompt to seek out evidence that the Confucian system was altogether inferior to Christianity, admitted that Confucianism was not "merely" a system of morality, but also contained religion.<sup>1</sup> Sir Charles Eliot, on the contrary, says "it has produced twenty centuries of gentlemen. Still, it is not in any ordinary sense a religion."<sup>2</sup> Similarly Sir Thomas Wade declared that the Chinese "have indeed a cult, or rather a mixture of cults, but no creed." Hegel said that Religion is the Infinite Spirit of God becoming self-conscious through the medium of the finite spirit. The late Father Tyrrell held that what distinguishes religion from ethics is "the belief in another world and the endeavour to hold intercourse with it." Kant said that when moral duties are regarded as divine commands, that is religion. Fichte said that religion was Knowledge rather than morality. Matthew Arnold defined religion as "morality touched with emotion." Schleiermacher said that religion consisted in the consciousness of absolute dependence on a Power which influences us though we cannot influence it in turn.

It is obvious that until we are all agreed on what we mean by Religion it is useless to enquire whether the Confucian system is or is not entitled to the name. One might as well try to determine whether a given literary composition is a poem before we have agreed upon a definition of Poetry. Some writers have been apt to look for some quality that is common to all religion as the best basis for a definition; but, as Edward Caird has reminded us, "such a quality, if it could be found, would be something so vague and abstract that little or nothing could be made of it."<sup>3</sup> As nobody has yet invented

<sup>1</sup> "The Religion of China," in *Religious Systems of the World* (8th ed.), pp. 61 *seq.*

<sup>2</sup> *Quarterly Review*, October 1907, p. 374.

<sup>3</sup> *The Evolution of Religion* (3rd ed.), vol. i. p. 40.

a definition which will satisfy every one, we must perforce leave Confucianism unlabelled: though if we all agree that a religious attitude implies a deep sense of moral responsibility (either to our own higher selves or to an external Power) and a feeling that to do what we believe to be right—irrespective of how we come to have ideas of right and wrong at all—is “wisdom in the scorn of consequence,” then we cannot go far astray in asserting that Confucianism is not an irreligious or unreligious system, but is merely an untheological one.

If the word Religion may be said to have almost as many meanings as there are cultivated human minds, what is to be said of the word God? The Christian objection to Chinese ancestor-worship, of which Confucius approved, is that it is a form of idolatry, inasmuch as the deceased ancestors are worshipped as gods. Here again our concurrence or dissent must depend upon the exact shade of meaning to be attached to the word “god.” A rough unhewn stone may be a “god” at one place and time—though probably, as in the case of the meteoric stone that is said to have been carried in the Ark of Jahveh, it is never regarded by “initiates” as more than a sacred emblem or representation. At another place and time God becomes an ineffable Spirit invisible to the human eye and only partially attainable by human thought. “Of Thee,” said Hooker, “our fittest eloquence is silence, while we confess without confessing that Thy Glory is unsearchable and beyond our reach.” Nor need it be supposed that the sublimer conception of Deity is the newly-won possession of Christians only. Perhaps no loftier idea of the Godhead has ever existed in man’s mind than that of the composers of some of the Indian Vedas and Upanishads which were produced many hundreds if not thousands of years B.C.; indeed Hooker’s prayer and many other Christian prayers grander and nobler would not seem at all





HILLS NEAR AI-SHAN (see p. 388).

p. 330]



HILL, WOOD AND STREAM





out of place if they were put into the mouth of an Indian forest-sage or a prehistoric Brahman.

It is very difficult, then, to know without precise definition what is the exact meaning of those who declare that the Chinese make gods of their dead fathers. Du Bose has condemned the Chinese ancestral cult because it inculcates the worship of "parents once human but now divine," and he quotes with apparent approval the words of another writer who describes it as "one of the subtlest phases of idolatry—essentially evil with the guise of goodness—ever established among men."<sup>1</sup> Wells Williams says that Chinese ancestor-worship is distinctly idolatrous; yet he admits that the rites consist "merely of pouring out libations and burning paper and candles at the grave, and then a family meeting at a social feast, with a few simple prostrations and petitions . . . all is pleasant, decorous, and harmonious . . . and the family meeting on this occasion is looked forward to by all with much the same feeling that Christmas is in Old England or Thanksgiving in New England."<sup>2</sup> So says the earnest American missionary; and those of us who not only see nothing wrong in the Chinese ancestral ceremonies but would be exceedingly sorry to see them abolished, will perhaps feel inclined to smile at the reproachful terms in which he refers to Sir John Davis, who had expressed the heterodox opinion that the rites were "harmless, if not meritorious, forms of respect for the dead."

Another American writer, well known as an authority on China, is equally strongly opposed to any compromise with the cult of ancestors.

"It makes dead men into gods, and its only gods are dead men. Its love, its gratitude, and its fears are for earthly parents only. It has no conception of a Heavenly Father, and feels no interest in such

<sup>1</sup> *The Dragon, Image and Demon*, pp. 77 and 88.

<sup>2</sup> *The Middle Kingdom* (1883 ed.), vol. ii. p. 253-4.

a being when He is made known. Either Christianity will never be introduced into China or ancestral worship will be given up, for they are contradictories. In the death struggle between them the fittest only will survive."<sup>1</sup>

To show that this is not quite the view taken by all American missionaries, let us quote the words of yet a third. Dr. W. A. P. Martin, whose *Lore of Cathay* is one of the most interesting books of its kind on China yet produced, has a valuable chapter on ancestor-worship in which he takes a much more liberal view than that of his colleagues, though as a champion of Christianity he feels himself obliged to find fault with "the transformation of the deceased into tutelar divinities" and with "the invocation of departed spirits." He admits that the ceremonies connected with the cult are of an exceedingly impressive nature.

"The spectacle of a great nation," he says, "with its whole population gathered round the altars of their ancestors, tracing their lineage up to the hundredth generation, and recognising the ties of kindred to the hundredth degree, is one that partakes of the sublime."<sup>2</sup>

Most of my readers are doubtless aware that it has been, and perhaps still is, the custom of many missionaries to require their converts to surrender their ancestral tablets, or to destroy them, as a proof of their sincerity before baptism. There are many sad stories connected with this cruel proceeding,<sup>3</sup> and it is refreshing to listen to the frank confession of so experienced and fair-minded a missionary as Dr. Martin, who admits that he himself once insisted on

<sup>1</sup> *Chinese Characteristics* (5th ed.), p. 185.

<sup>2</sup> *The Lore of Cathay*, p. 275.

<sup>3</sup> None perhaps more pitiful than that which is related in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* of September 15, 1900. I forbear to quote this story, as it would not be fair to do so without hearing "the other side."



a convert giving up his ancestral tablets, and has ever since regarded this as one of the mistakes of his life, and looks back upon it with "poignant grief." As he adds decisively, "I had no right to impose such a test," it is to be hoped that his words have served as a warning to some, at least, of his successors in the missionary field.

If Christianity is to win its way to the hearts of the Chinese people it will probably have to condescend to a compromise on the question of ancestor-worship. A recent writer in *The Spectator* evidently thinks it is the Chinese who will make all the compromise. "There is no reason," he says, "why the Chinese, in accordance with their proved mental habit, should not adopt a kind of metaphysical reading of ancestor-worship such as would enjoy the hearty sanction of the Church which preaches the 'Communion of Saints.'"<sup>1</sup>

It is indeed likely enough that as time goes on certain superannuated features of ancestor-worship, as of other Chinese religious practices, will gradually disappear, but it is probable that this will be due rather to rationalistic pressure than to Christianity. The Chinese are beginning to imbibe Western culture—especially Western science and philosophy—with avidity, and the more they do so the more ready will they be to abandon some of their traditional ideas with regard to demonology, *fêng-shui*, the burning of paper furniture and money, the worship of the "gods" of Taoism, and many other superstitious beliefs and practices; indeed this lopping off of the rotten branches of the religious life of China began several years ago, and is not likely to cease until there are no more rotten branches left on the tree. But it is a very noteworthy fact that the abandonment of many popular superstitions does not necessarily imply the establishment of Christian dogmas in their place.

<sup>1</sup> *The Spectator*, August 22, 1908, p 267.

A year ago, while travelling in the province of Anhui, I visited a town which had so far abandoned its "heathen" rites that a long row of images had been dragged from their roadside shrines and tossed into the river. Yet I was told by resident European missionaries that their converts had had nothing whatever, directly or indirectly, to do with this proceeding; it had been carried out solely by the young local *literati*, who had shown themselves as absolutely impervious to the Christian propaganda as they were contemptuous of the puerile superstitions of the masses. But it will be a long time yet before the essential rites and observances connected with the cult of ancestors begin to suffer from the inroads either of Rationalism or of Christianity. Buddhism and Taoism are China's privileged guests, who—unless they speedily adapt themselves to new conditions—may shortly find they have outstayed their welcome; but the cult of ancestors is enthroned in the hearts of the people, and if Christianity is ever to dislodge it, or even find a place by its side, the intruder will be obliged to adopt a less arrogant and less uncompromising attitude than it has assumed hitherto. Dr. A. H. Smith, Dr. Edkins,<sup>1</sup> and other missionaries declare that China must choose between Christianity and ancestor-worship. She made up her mind on the subject in the middle of the eighteenth century, as a result of the controversy between the Jesuits and the Vatican,<sup>2</sup> and there is no indication that she regrets her choice.

It will be remembered that in the controversy alluded to, the Jesuit missionaries, who had hitherto been amazingly successful in their propaganda, strongly advocated the toleration of ancestor-worship on the

<sup>1</sup> *Religion in China* (1893 ed.), p. 153.

<sup>2</sup> For brief accounts of this celebrated episode, see Prof. Parker's *China and Religion*, pp. 197–203; Williams's *Middle Kingdom* (1883 ed.), vol. ii. pp. 299 *seq.*, and Max Müller's *Last Essays* (Second Series), pp. 314–18.



ground that the rites were merely civil and commemorative, and were not idolatrous. This view, after lengthy disputes, was finally condemned as erroneous, and the cult of ancestors on the part of Christians was prohibited by the Roman pontiff (Benedict XIV.) "without qualification or concession of any kind."<sup>1</sup> The result of this was the collapse of the young and vigorous Roman Church in China. The Chinese Emperor, who had found himself contradicted on Chinese soil by papal edicts, was naturally disinclined to treat the foreign religion and its professors with the tolerance and respect that had hitherto been extended to it.<sup>2</sup> It is interesting to note the Protestant attitude towards the papal decision on this matter. "It is not easy to perceive, perhaps," writes Dr. Wells Williams, "why the Pope and the Dominicans were so much opposed to the worship of ancestral penates among the Chinese when they performed much the same services themselves before the images of Mary, Joseph, Cecilia, Ignatius, and hundreds of other deified mortals."<sup>3</sup>

Evidently the good Doctor could not withstand the temptation to administer a sharp Protestant pin-prick to his Romanist rivals, though "it is not easy to perceive" why he should find fault with the Papists in this respect when missionaries of his own branch of Christianity were (as some still are) equally ready to attempt the cheerless task of reconciling contradictions. They condemn the Chinese for their demonology and superstitious follies, yet many of them are merely substituting Western superstition for Eastern. They expel demons from the bodies of sick men, they

<sup>1</sup> Parker, *op. cit.* p. 202.

<sup>2</sup> "Considering," writes Sir Charles Eliot, "what would have been the probable fate of Chinamen in Rome who publicly contradicted the Pope on matters of doctrine, it is hardly surprising if K'ang Hsi dealt severely with the rebellious foreign religion." (*Quarterly Review* October 1907, p. 375.)

<sup>3</sup> *The Middle Kingdom* (1883 ed.), vol. ii. p. 253.

report in their journals the occurrence of miracles wrought by the Deity on behalf of their propaganda, they pray for the supersession of the laws of meteorology, they report cases of real devils actually speaking through "idols," they believe in the existence of real witches, and they still teach the "heathen" fabulous stories of the creation of the world and the origin of man.<sup>1</sup>

That missionaries of this class are less numerous than formerly is fortunately true, but their teachings presumably remain the treasured possession of their converts, and if those converts or their descendants ever break out in acts of fanatical bigotry and intolerance, or take to enforcing their beliefs on others, the responsibility will rest with the Mission Boards for sending out Christian teachers whose religious beliefs were of a type that flourished widely in our own land in the age of witch-burning and about the time of Mr. Praise-God Barebones, but which, thanks chiefly to Biblical criticism and the study of comparative mythology and the advance of scientific knowledge, has happily become all but extinct among our educated classes.

But to return to the specific charge brought against Romanists by Dr. Wells Williams—that the Pope and the Dominicans condemned ancestor-worship as idolatrous although they conducted much the same services themselves before the images of the *Mater Dei* and other deified mortals—this charge is one that has never yet been rebutted in a manner satisfactory to those who are not Romanists.

If a Chinese goes to his *t'u ti* (village "god") or to Kuan Yin or to the Queen of Heaven (*Shêng Mu T'ien Hou*) or to Lung Wang the ruler of clouds and water, with prayers for rain, or for the cure of disease, or for

<sup>1</sup> Evidence of these things may be found *passim* in such journals as *China's Millions*. Some typical cases are mentioned by Arthur Davenport in his interesting work *China from Within*. He also quotes in full the case referred to on p. 332 (footnote 3).



safety from shipwreck; or if he beseeches the spirits of his dead ancestors to protect the family and grant its members health and prosperity, his proceedings are immediately condemned as idolatrous. But if a Christian goes and prays to St. Hubert for an antidote to a mad dog's bite or to St. Apollonia for a toothache-cure, or to St. Theodorus at Rome for the life of a sick child, or to the Blessed John Berchmans for the eradication of cancer in the breast, or to Our Lady of Lourdes for the cure of a diseased bone, this is not idolatry but good Christianity! As a matter of fact the ancestral spirits of the Chinese and the great majority of the Taoist deities are neither more nor less "gods" than the saints of Christendom. They—like the saints—are regarded as the spirits of certain dead men who in their new life beyond the grave are supposed to have acquired more or less limited powers over some of the forces of nature and over certain of the threads of human destiny. One is just as much a "god" as the other. The Christian refuses to call his saints gods because that would be confessing to polytheism, and as he professes to be a monotheist that would never do; but he insists on accusing the Chinese of turning dead men into gods because he wants to prove that the Chinese are idolatrous and polytheistic.

If he says that he goes by the verdict of the Chinese themselves, who apply to their dead men the title *shên* and (in some cases) the higher title *ti*, it is fair to remind him that if he insists upon translating the former of these terms by the word "god" he should at the same time supply a clear definition of the precise meaning which that word is intended to convey; when he has done that it will be time enough for us to consider whether the word "god" gives a fair idea of the meaning of the Chinese when they declare that their deceased ancestors have become *shên*. As to the supposed functions of the Chinese "deities" and the Christian "saints," it would

puzzle a keen dialectician to say how the miracle-working of the one essentially differs from that of the other, or how it is that St. Thomas of Canterbury, in spite of his wonder-working bones, is a mere saint, while Kuan Ti—who was once a stout soldier, but having been canonised by imperial decree is now famous throughout the Chinese Empire as the spiritual Patron of War—is to be hooted at as a false “god.”<sup>1</sup>

It would seem that what the Christian says, in effect, is this: If the Pope—the earthly head of our religion—canonises a dead man, that dead man becomes a saint, and you may pray to him as much as you like; if the earthly head of your religion—the Emperor of China—canonises a man, he becomes a false god, possibly a demon, and if you commit the sin of praying to him you do so on the peril of your soul. It is an exemplification of the old saying, “Orthodoxy is my doxy, heterodoxy is your doxy.” In other words—you are right if you agree with me: if

<sup>1</sup> The processes of beatification and canonisation in Rome and China are in many respects similar. Some years ago the Archbishop of Rouen and other prelates addressed a letter to the Pope with regard to Joan of Arc, begging the Holy See to declare that “this admirable girl practised heroically the Christian virtues . . . and that she is consequently worthy of being inscribed among the Blessed and of being publicly invoked by all Christian people.” After the lapse of some years Pope Pius IX. duly “proclaimed the heroic quality of Joan of Arc’s virtues, and the authenticity of the miracles associated with her name”; and since then, as is well known, the French heroine has gone through the process of beatification. (See *Times* of April 13, 1909.) In China a man or woman who was distinguished during life for some heroic action or for pre-eminent virtue may—in suitable circumstances—be recommended by the local officials for canonisation, and if the Emperor wills it to be so he issues a decree whereby that person becomes a saint or a god (whichever term we prefer) and is officially entitled to be the recipient of public worship. The memorial in which the magistrates set forth the virtues of the dead man—and the miracles performed at his tomb if there happen to have been any—might be translated almost word for word from similar memorials sent to Rome by orthodox Christian prelates; and the Chinese Emperor gives his decision in the matter in very much the same terms as are adopted by the Pope. Cf. Farnell’s *Evolution of Religion*, p. 77.



you don't you are wrong! That was indeed a true saying of Thackeray's, "We view the world through our own eyes, each of us, and make from within us the things we see."

Of course there are many degrees of "godhead"—if we are to employ that term—within the ranks of the Chinese "pantheon." The man who, on account of his distinguished career in this world, or the supposed miracles wrought by him since his removal to the next, has been canonised or "deified" by imperial decree, holds a much more important and imposing position than the ordinary father of a family who, as it were, automatically becomes *shên*—a spirit or ancestral divinity—through the simple and inevitable process of dying. But the difference is rather in degree than in kind. The Emperor, as Father of his people and as their High Priest or Pope, can raise any one he chooses to the position of a *Ti*, and can subsequently elevate or degrade him in the ranks of the national divinities in accordance with his imperial will. As a matter of fact the process is intimately connected with statecraft and considerations of practical expediency. "In the Chinese Government," as Sir Alfred Lyall says, "the temporal and spiritual powers, instead of leaning towards different centres, meet and support each other like an arch, of which the Emperor's civil and sacred prerogative is the keystone."<sup>1</sup>

What the Emperor can do on a large scale every head of a Chinese family does regularly on a small one. In a sense no ceremony is necessary: a man becomes an ancestral spirit as soon as he dies, irrespective of anything that his son may do for him. But his position as a *shên* is hardly a regular one—he is a mere "homeless ghost"—until the son has carried out the traditional rites. The *shên chu*<sup>2</sup>—the "spirit-tablet"—becomes the dead man's representative; no

<sup>1</sup> *Asiatic Studies* (Second Series), 1906 ed., p. 155.

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 277 *seq.*

longer visible and audible, he is believed to be still carrying on his existence on a non-material plane, and to be still capable, in some mysterious way which the Chinese themselves do not pretend to understand, of protecting and watching over the living members of the family and of bringing prosperity and happiness to future generations. The filial affection of son for father is deepened on the father's death into permanent religious reverence, and this reverential feeling finds its natural expression in a system of rites and ceremonies which, for the want of a better term, we call ancestor-worship. The "idolatry" consists in bowing with clasped hands towards the tombs or spirit-tablets, placing before them little cups and dishes containing wine and food, and burning incense in front of the family portraits in the ancestral temple at the season of New Year, or (if there are no portraits) before a scroll containing the family pedigree. If the disembodied members of a family were "gods" in the sense usually attributed to the word their spiritual powers would not be confined—as they normally are—to the affairs of their own descendants. The orthodox Chinese knows that it is not only useless but wrong to "worship"<sup>1</sup> the spirits of any family but his own. "For a man to sacrifice to a spirit which does not belong to him," said Confucius, "is flattery."<sup>2</sup>

For the sake of brevity and convenience we may and sometimes do speak of the private ancestral spirits and of the great national divinities as "gods," but we should preserve the necessary distinctions of meaning in our own minds. That it is only a rough-and-ready mode of speech may easily be perceived when we attempt to make a single Chinese term apply to both these classes of spiritual beings. It is true

<sup>1</sup> This word "worship" is not a strictly correct translation of the Chinese *pai*. "To visit or salute ceremoniously" would, as a rule, be a fairer rendering.

<sup>2</sup> *Lun Yü*, ii. 24 (Legge's translation).



enough that both (in most cases) sprang from the same human origin, so that their powers and functions differ, as already pointed out, in degree rather than in kind ; but if—whether from ignorance or from a desire to be exceptionally polite—we were to describe a man's deceased forefathers as *Ti* (the nearest equivalent to "God" that the Chinese language possesses) we should probably be the innocent cause of an outburst of genial mirth. The average Chinese takes a very much humbler view of the degree of deification that has fallen to his dead father's lot than would be implied by the use of so distinguished a title.

It is a rather common opinion that "the worship of ancestors probably had its origin in the fear of the evil which might be done by ghosts."<sup>1</sup> Lafcadio Hearn, a devoted disciple of Herbert Spencer, took a similar view of Japanese religion, and held that Shinto was at one time a religion of "perpetual fear." Nobushige Hozumi, Dr. W. G. Aston and others have disposed of this opinion with reference to Japan. The former writer, who was called to the English Bar and subsequently became a Professor of Law at Tokyo, and was still proud to own himself an ancestor-worshipper, declared that "it was the love of ancestors, not the dread of them, which gave rise to the custom of worshipping and making offerings of food and drink to their spirits. . . . Respect for their parents may, in some cases, have become akin to awe, yet it was love, not dread, which caused this feeling of awe. . . . We celebrate the anniversary of our ancestors, pay visits to their graves, offer flowers, food and drink, burn incense, and bow before their tombs entirely from a feeling of love and respect for their memory, and no question of 'dread' enters our minds in doing so."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sir Charles Eliot, in *The Quarterly Review*, October 1907, p. 362.

<sup>2</sup> *Ancestor-worship and Japanese Law* by Nobushige Hozumi (Tokyo, 1901), pp. 4 *seq.* For a similar view see Tylor's *Primitive Culture* (4th ed.), vol. ii. p. 113.

So far as I have had opportunities of judging of Chinese ancestor-worship, I am strongly of opinion that, subject to what has been said in an earlier chapter,<sup>1</sup> the words of this writer are as applicable to China as they are to Japan.<sup>2</sup> There seems, indeed, to be very little reason why any one should propound or hold the theory that a loving father was liable to turn into a malevolent ghost. What the Chinese believe is that their deceased ancestors are well-disposed towards them, and will give them reasonable help and protection throughout the course of their lives: though if the ancestral graves are left uncared-for or the periodical sacrifices neglected or the spirit-tablets not treated with respect, or if living members of the family have wasted the family property or have been guilty of discreditable conduct, then no doubt the spirits will be angry and will punish them for the crime of lack of filial piety (*pu hsiao*), the worst crime of which a Chinese can be guilty.

The Chinese are quite satisfied that so long as they behave in a filial manner (the word "filial" being taken in its widest possible signification) they have nothing whatever to fear from their ghostly ancestors. To be truly filial a Chinese must not merely behave with dutiful obedience towards his parents when they are alive and with dutiful reverence towards their manes when they are dead, but he must also act in such a way as to reflect no speck of discredit upon

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 119, 263.

<sup>2</sup> In case the reader should be misled into the belief that this opinion is shared by all foreigners in China, I quote some words recently published by the Rev. J. Macgowan in his work *Sidelights on Chinese Life* (pp. 75-6). The root of ancestor-worship, he says, "lies neither in reverence nor in affection for the dead, but in selfishness and dread. The kindly ties and the tender affection that used to bind men together when they were in the world and to knit their hearts in a loving union seem to vanish, and the living are only oppressed with a sense of the mystery of the dead, and a fear lest they should do anything that might incur their displeasure and so bring misery upon the home." This view is not, I think, a fair one.



them by his own misdeeds. If his parents are themselves guilty of wrongdoing he is entitled to remonstrate with them, because after all his parents as well as himself owe filial reverence to their common ancestors. If the wrongdoing is all his own he is twice guilty, for he has committed an action which is in itself intrinsically wrong, and by degrading his own moral nature he has brought disgrace on his parents. According to this theory, the Chinese who commits a dishonourable action is unfilial; if he breaks the law he is unfilial; if he does not discharge all his dead father's obligations he is unfilial; if he ruins his own health through immorality or excesses of any kind he is unfilial; if he fails to bring up legitimate offspring (to continue the family and carry on the ancestral rites) he is unfilial.<sup>1</sup>

Needless to say there is no such person as a perfectly filial son in all China—or anywhere else in the world for that matter: but that fact no more justifies us in attempting to disparage the noble and lofty Chinese ideal of filial piety than the failure of Christian men and Christian Governments to act in accordance with the doctrines of the Sermon on the Mount justifies us in disparaging the highest ethical ideal of Christianity. If the ideal—in either the Christian or the Chinese system—were actually attainable, it would become necessary to form a new ideal to take the place of that which had ceased as such to exist or had been seen to “fade into the light of common day.” Some Western observers are apt to think that the Chinese doctrine of filial piety is too one-sided to be practical: that it makes the son the slave of his parents and gives the parents at the same time the position of irresponsible tyrants. No greater mistake could possibly be made. The responsibilities of the parent are correlative to the duties of the child.

<sup>1</sup> According to Mencius the most unfilial of sons is he who does not become the father of children.

The *locus classicus* for this is a famous story told of Confucius himself. When he was Minister of Crime in his native state a father brought an accusation against his own son. Confucius sent them both to gaol, and when he was questioned as to why he punished the father as well as the son and did not rather condemn the son for the gross crime of disobeying his father, he replied thus: "Am I to punish for unfilial conduct one who has not been taught filial duties? Is not he who fails to teach his son his duties equally guilty with the son who fails to fulfil them?"<sup>1</sup>

This is a point of view which the Chinese—or at least those who have not succumbed to the seductive whispers of Western individualism—thoroughly understand and appreciate to this day. Cases have been heard in the British courts at Weihaiwei which prove this to be so. On the rare occasions when a father has been compelled to bring an action against his son, or on the more numerous occasions when a father is summoned to the court in connection with a criminal case in which his own son is the accused, he frequently begins by making a humble acknowledgment that his own failure to perform his duties as father must at least partially account for his son's depravity; or if in accordance with the Chinese practice the British magistrate sternly lectures a father on the enormity of his offence in bringing up his son so badly that the son has fallen into the clutches of the law, the unhappy man admits the justice of the charge promptly and without reserve. *Yu ts'o: ling tsui*,—"I am guilty: I accept punishment."

But the Chinese doctrine of filial piety does not concern itself only with the relations between parent and child. We have seen that the whole of Chinese society is regarded as a vast family of which the

<sup>1</sup> For a criticism of the theory, cf. Montesquieu, *L'Esprit des Lois*, vi. 20. But see also some very appreciative remarks by the same writer on the Chinese theory of Filial Piety, as applied to both domestic and political relationships, in Book xix. 17-19.



Emperor is Father; similarly the territorial officials are *in loco parentis* to the heads of the families living within their respective jurisdictions: they are the *fu-mu kuan*—the Father-and-Mother officials.<sup>1</sup> The doctrine of *Hsiao*—Filial Piety—applies not only to domestic relationships but also to the relations between Emperor and Minister and between rulers and ruled. The head of a family who disobeys an official proclamation is guilty of an offence towards the local *fu-mu kuan* which is almost identical in kind with the offence of a son who wilfully disobeys his father. Here again the responsibilities are not all on one side: the *fu-mu kuan* is by the higher authorities held theoretically responsible for the peace and good order and contentment of the district over which he presides, just as Confucius is said to have held the father responsible for the misbehaviour of his son.

Sometimes, indeed, this doctrine is carried too far, as when an official is degraded for not preventing an outbreak of crime which he could not possibly have foreseen. Western peoples have taken advantage of this theory when they have called upon the Government to punish an official within whose jurisdiction the slaughter of a missionary has occurred, even when the official's complicity is quite unproved. The people themselves know well that their officials are theoretically responsible for their well-being, and often—through their lack of scientific knowledge—blame their *fu-mu kuan* for troubles which the very best and most diligent of officials could not have averted. The local officials—nay, viceroys of provinces and even the Emperor himself—are regarded by their subordinates or subjects, or profess to regard themselves, as personally responsible for such occurrences as disastrous earthquakes, epidemics and inundations.<sup>2</sup> In 1909

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 9, 15.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the beautiful prayer-poem of the Chinese king Hsüan Wang, attributed to the ninth century B.C. (For text and translation see Legge's *Chinese Classics*, vol. iv. pt. ii, pp. 528 seq.)

the appointment of a new governor to the province of Shantung happened to be followed by a serious drought; he became highly unpopular at once and received the disagreeable nickname of the Drought-Governor. As recently as 1908 I passed through a district in the province of Shansi in which no rain had fallen for several months. On entering the magisterial town of the district I noticed that the streets were thronged with crowds of people from the country, all wearing willow-wreaths as a sign that the crops were threatened with destruction and that public prayers were being offered for rain.<sup>1</sup> The whole town was in confusion, and the sudden appearance of a foreigner made matters worse. A noisy and restless crowd followed me into my inn and proved so troublesome (though by no means violent) that I was obliged to send a message to the local magistrate to request him to have the inn-yard cleared. My messenger soon came back to report that the magistrate's official residence or yamên was also closely invested by a clamouring mob and that the wretched man had been obliged to barricade his windows and doors to save himself from personal violence. He was therefore powerless to grant my request. The crowd had no complaint whatever against him except that his official prayers for rain had failed to have the desired result and that his culpable inability to establish friendly relations with the divine Powers was the evident cause of the drought.

This of course is carrying the theory of the mutual responsibilities of father and son, ruler and ruled, a great deal too far: but occurrences of this kind will become less and less frequent with the gradual advance of scientific and general knowledge; and it is surely far better that the changes should occur automatically than by forcible interference with customs and superstitions which in their fall might involve the indis-

<sup>1</sup> See p. 187.



criminate destruction of good and bad. We may now perceive, perhaps, how it was that Confucius, who was evidently almost an agnostic with regard to gods and spiritual beings,<sup>1</sup> was strenuously opposed to the abandonment of the rites and ceremonies that presupposed the existence of such beings. He insisted upon the importance of keeping up the cult of ancestors not so much for the sake of the dead but because it fostered among living men feelings of love, respect, reverence, and duty towards family and State. The souls of the dead might or might not be unconscious of what was done for them, but it was in the interests of social harmony and political stability that the traditional religious and commemorative ceremonies should be jealously preserved and handed down to posterity and that during the performance of such ceremonies the presence of the ancestral spirits should at least be tacitly assumed.

There is one alleged objection to ancestor-worship which only a few years ago might have been regarded as most serious; and indeed it has been urged again and again by missionaries, travellers, ethical writers and sociologists. It was supposed that the cult of

<sup>1</sup> It need not be supposed that there was anything unique about Confucius's agnosticism. There is evidence enough that he did not stand alone in his attitude of uncertainty with regard to the spiritual world. The writings of Mo Tzŭ (Micius), who taught an attractive philosophy of his own in the fourth and fifth centuries B.C., show inferentially that the question of whether there was or was not a world of spirits was a frequent subject of debate among the learned. Micius himself took the view that "there are heavenly spirits and there are spirits of the hills and streams, and there are spirits of the dead also." He hotly combated the view (which must have been widely current) that no such spirits existed. The subject remained a stock question for debate; indeed once it had been raised, how could it ever have ceased to agitate men's minds? The philosopher Wang Ch'ung (first century A.D.) was a materialist, and besides flouting many prevalent superstitions, such as those relating to virgin-births and other prodigies, he entered the lists against those who sought to prove that dead men continue to have a conscious existence or can exercise any control or influence over their living descendants.

ancestors kept the race that practised it in the grip of a remorseless conservatism; that the ancestor-worshipper always turned his back on progress and reform on the plea that what was good enough for his grandfather was good enough for him; that ancestor-worship was the secret of Oriental stagnation, and that no Eastern race could be expected to advance in civilisation and culture until it had learned to work for the good of its posterity rather than for the barren honour of its ancestry.

“As a system, ancestral worship,” says a European writer, “is tenfold more potent for keeping the people in darkness than all the idols in the land.” “By its deadening influences,” says another, “the nation has been kept for ages looking backward and downward instead of forward and upward.”<sup>1</sup> A few years ago, be it repeated, the theory was one that had some weight: not because it was convincing in itself but because facts were wanting by which it could be refuted. The leap of Japan into the front rank of civilised nations has for ever disposed of the argument that ancestor-worshippers are necessarily impervious to change and reform. The cult of ancestors, be it remembered, is nearly if not quite as prominent a feature in the religious life of Japan as in that of China. Says a foreign observer, “The ancestor-worship of the Japanese is no superstition: it is the great essential fact of their lives.”<sup>2</sup> Says a native observer, “the introduction of Western civilisation, which has wrought so many social and political changes during the last sixty years, has had no influence whatever in the direction of modifying the custom.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Both of these enlightening observations are quoted with evident approval by the Rev. H. C. Du Bose in his work *The Dragon, Image and Demon* (New York: 1887), pp. 87-8.

<sup>2</sup> O. K. Davis in the *Century Illustrated Magazine*, November 1904. This is quoted by Prof. H. A. Giles in *Adversaria Sinica*, p. 202.

<sup>3</sup> Nobushige Hozumi in *Ancestor-Worship and Japanese Law*, p. 2.



According to Lafcadio Hearn, ancestor-worship is "that which specially directs national life and shapes national character. Patriotism belongs to it. Loyalty is based on it." Little wonder is it that, knowing what the ancestral cult has done for Japan, Prof. H. A. Giles in quoting this passage adds a significant remark. "It would seem," he writes, "that so far from backing up missionaries who are imploring the Chinese to get rid of ancestral worship, the sooner we establish it in this country the better for our own interests." That ancestor-worship can be introduced or reintroduced into an occidental country in the twentieth century is of course out of the question: but before we continue to devote human lives and vast treasure to the self-imposed task of uprooting it from its congenial oriental soil, would it not be well earnestly to consider whether our work may not be regarded by our own distant posterity as the most stupendous folly or as the gravest and most disastrous of errors ever committed by the nations of the West? By all means let it be admitted that ancestor-worship helped to make China content—perhaps foolishly content—with her traditional culture, and too heedless of the rapid development of the occidental Powers in wealth and civilisation and scientific equipment: on the other hand it helped to make her people industrious, frugal, patient, cheerful, law-abiding, filial, good fathers, loyal to the past, hopeful and thoughtful for the future. Most emphatically may we say this, that it is not essential to China's future progress that ancestor-worship should be abolished. Among the people of China their ancestors occupy the place of a kind of Second Chamber—a phantom House of Lords, strongly antagonistic to sudden change and to rash experiments whether in social life, religion or politics; a House of Lords which—like Upper Houses elsewhere—may at times have opposed real progress and useful reform, but which perhaps far oftener has saved the nation

from the consequences of its own excesses by exercising a sacred right of veto of which no Lower House has the least desire to deprive it : a veto which is none the less effective, none the less binding on living men, through being exercised by a silent crowd of viewless ghosts.



## CHAPTER XV

### TAOISM, LOCAL DEITIES, TREE-WORSHIP

It is not only Confucianism, with its grand ethical system, its acquiescence in Nature-worship and its cult of ancestors, that has built up the curiously unsymmetrical edifice of Chinese religion. Taoism and Buddhism must also be taken into account; and if one can find for them but few words of praise it is only fair to remember that the Taoism of to-day has very little in common with the lofty if sometimes rather misty speculations enshrined in that remarkable old classic the *Tao Tê Ching*, and that Buddhism—as now practised in north-eastern Shantung and indeed in the greater part of China (excluding certain famous monastic centres)—is perhaps irrevocably degenerate and corrupt. The *Tao Tê Ching*, the sacred book of Taoism, is generally supposed, probably on insufficient grounds,<sup>1</sup> to have been written by a philosopher known as Lao Tzŭ,

<sup>1</sup> Prof. H. A. Giles holds that the *Tao Tê Ching* is a compilation and was not written by Lao Tzŭ himself though it probably enshrines some of his sayings. He gives strong reasons for believing that it must have been compiled after the appearance of the works of Chuang Tzŭ (fourth century B.C.), Han Fei Tzŭ (third century B.C.) and Huai Nan Tzŭ (second century B.C.). As for Lao Tzŭ himself, Dr. Giles rejects the slender evidence that makes him a contemporary of Confucius, and assigns him to "some unknown period in remote antiquity." (*China and the Chinese*, pp. 145, 148 seq.)

said to have been an elder contemporary of Confucius, in the sixth century B.C.

The Taoist philosophy, as set forth in that book, may or may not have been indigenous to China; some writers insist that it was wholly a product of Chinese speculation,<sup>1</sup> while others trace it to early Indian philosophy<sup>2</sup> and even connect it with Buddhism.<sup>3</sup> Though its doctrines are metaphysical as well as ethical, Taoism is to some extent comparable with Confucianism, in which the ethical element is predominant. Indeed most writers have admitted that in enunciating the noble doctrine "Return good for evil," Lao Tzū rose to a height never quite attained by Confucius, though the latter also anticipated Christianity by formulating a version of the Golden Rule. One of the best outline comparisons ever attempted between the two systems of Taoism and Confucianism is that recently made by a sympathetic American writer,<sup>4</sup> who concludes with the carefully-weighed and highly important utterance that the two codes combined "furnished at once the foundation and superstructure of as pure, high, and at the same time practical system of ethics as the world has ever seen. It need fear comparison with none. Even that laid down in the Bible, if

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Dr. W. A. P. Martin in his *Lore of Cathay*, and many other authorities.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Sir Robert Douglas, *Confucianism and Taouism* (5th ed.), p. 191. Max Müller rejected the theory that Tao was a Vedic idea transferred from India to China: but he mentioned a Sanskrit word and concept which in its historical development ran parallel with that of *Tao*. This word was *Rita*—the Way, the Path, the *κινῶν ἀκίνητον* or *primum mobile*. (*Last Essays*, Second Series, pp. 290 seq.)

<sup>3</sup> Mr. T. W. Kingsmill (*The Taoteh King*) calls it "one of the few remains existing of primitive Buddhism." He points out that as there is no intimation of any intercourse between China and India before the Han period, the compilation of the *Tao Tê Ching* must be assigned to that age,—several hundred years after the supposed date of Lao Tzū.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Chester Holcombe in the *International Journal of Ethics*, January 1908, pp. 168 seq. The whole article deserves careful attention.



carefully separated from the religious element here and there intermingled with it, can do no more for man than this ancient system of the Far East can do. And why should it be otherwise, since the two are similar almost to identity, and are, as has been claimed, the necessary outgrowth of the same human spirit."

There is no better augury for future good relations between the thinkers and scholars (if not the Governments and peoples) of East and West than the recent growth of a tolerant and generous spirit on the part of European students of oriental ethic and religion. One still hears constantly of "heathen" and "pagan"—words which, however inoffensive in their original meaning, have come to be regarded as somewhat opprobrious epithets; but that there is a very decided change for the better coming over missionary enterprise in China can be proved very simply by a comparison between the sympathetic appreciation shown in the passage from which the above statement is quoted (written, be it noted, by one who is keenly interested in missionary work in China) and the almost inconceivable bigotry and narrow-mindedness shown by many missionary writers only a few years ago. Even Dr. Legge, the laborious and conscientious translator of the Chinese classics, allowed his Christian prepossessions, as we have already seen, to obscure his judgment and stultify his conclusions. "Their sages, *falsely so called*," is how he refers to some of the greatest ethical teachers the world has seen.<sup>1</sup> "In January, 1882," writes a doctor of divinity, "a distinguished missionary in China attacked Max Müller as a foe to missions and as a heathen because he had instituted the series of translations of the Sacred Books of the East. The translation itself was an offence; but the use of the title *Sacred* definitely fixed Müller's status. Moreover, at even a later date, some missionaries in answer to the query from China-

<sup>1</sup> *The Chinese Classics*, vol. iii. pt. i. p. 200.

men 'Where now is Confucius?' were prompt to reply 'In hell.'"<sup>1</sup>

The missionaries of to-day (let us hope against hope that there are no exceptions) have abandoned their old savage belief that the "heathen" as such are destined for eternal damnation. This change of belief is of itself sufficient to revolutionise the attitude of Christian peoples towards those who are not Christians, and surely it makes the need of proselytising the "heathen" infinitely less urgent than it seemed to be when that theory still held sway. "If God be father of all," writes a missionary of fourteen years' standing in China, "it is as impossible to believe in the Bible as the sole written depository of the Spirit of God as in the condemnation of the heathen which once we were constrained to believe it taught."<sup>2</sup>

It is perhaps more necessary to lay emphasis on the value of pure Taoism as an ethical system than on that of the Confucian code, for one is apt—especially if one lives among the Chinese—to condemn Taoism almost unheard on account of the gross superstitions that characterise it at the present day. Popular Taoism is and for many centuries has been a compound of jugglery and fraud, of pseudo-religion and pseudo-philosophy. With all this Lao Tzŭ had nothing to do. That great man and his brilliant successor Chuang Tzŭ—who has been styled the St. Paul of Taoism—founded their theory of life and conduct on a mysterious entity called *Tao*, a word which has been variously translated Reason, Realisation, the Norm, the Word (*λόγος*), the Way, the First Cause, Nature, the Idea of the Good (in the Platonic sense), the Creative Principle, Truth, the Metaphysical Absolute, Virtue, Wisdom, God. This is no place

<sup>1</sup> Prof. G. W. Knox, D.D., LL.D., in *The American Journal of Theology*, October 1907, p. 569.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. W. K. McKibben in *The American Journal of Theology*, October 1907, p. 584.



for a discussion of the philosophical principles of pure Taoism, which has no visible existence among the farmers of Weihaiwei. All that need be said here is that to understand Tao and to regulate one's life according to Tao was to be a *chên-jên*, a true man, a Taoist.

As time went on Taoism became ninety-nine parts "ism" to one part Tao: it dabbled in alchemy, fortune-telling and astrology, and its votaries (who included several Chinese emperors) gave themselves up to a search for the elixir of immortality and the elusive secret of the transmutation of metals. The torch of a lofty philosophy passed into the hands of men who, instead of using the light to aid them in the search for the sublime *Tao*, soon quenched it in the stagnant waters of witchcraft and demonology. Some writers seem to have assumed that Lao Tzŭ, in spite of the acknowledged fact of his intellectual and moral greatness, was in some mysterious way the unwitting cause of the later corruptions: but, as has been said, a clear distinction must be drawn between popular Taoism (which has little or nothing to say of *Tao*) and the philosophic Taoism which has made a noble and permanent contribution to the ethical consciousness of the Chinese people.<sup>1</sup> Popular Taoism probably existed, in some form or other, long before the time of the compiler of the *Tao Tê Ching*. The astrology and alchemy and demonology that give the former many of its characteristic features may have existed in China from a very remote age. The extreme antiquity of superstitions of this kind in other parts of Asia is an undeniable fact: the records of the early civilisation of Chaldæa give us statements concerning the sorcerers and astrologers of that country that might be applied almost without altera-

<sup>1</sup> "Pure Taoism has never ceased to affect the cultured Chinese mind, just as pure Shinto-Taoism has never ceased, or did not for long cease, to affect the cultured Japanese Court."—PROF. E. H. PARKER, *China and Religion*, p. 258.

tion to the charm-mongers and adepts of Chinese Taoism.<sup>1</sup> The philosophy of Lao Tzū may be compared with a pure sparkling stream that bubbled up amid the crags of a lofty range of mountains; when it had flowed down the hillside and began to meander through the fields and villages below, its limpid waters became ever more and more defiled by the foulness and refuse of the plains. Perhaps it would be equally true to say that the source of the river of popular Taoism lies among the mists and marshes of some trackless and pestilential jungle; that its waters throughout the whole of its visible course are muddy and impure; and that the clear mountain stream that flowed from the doctrines of Lao Tzū and his interpreters and successors was only a tributary stream whose crystal waters were soon lost in the turbid flood of the main river. It was a clear perception of the fundamental difference between the philosophy of Lao Tzū and popular Taoism that induced a recent Japanese writer, Kakasu Okakura, to confer upon the former the name of Laoism, after its founder, and to relinquish to the latter the barren glory of the name of Taoism;<sup>2</sup> thus in contemplating the unattractive mythology and crude rituals of the Taoism of the temples we must beware of laying any of the responsibility for such follies on the grand though shadowy figure of "the Old Philosopher," in spite of the fact that his image has taken its place in the Taoist Trinity of gods who are supposed to reign (though not to rule) over the phenomenal Universe.

If it can be confidently asserted that the people of Weihaiwei know little or nothing of Laoism, it must be admitted that they still cling with apparent fondness to the puerile imaginings of Taoism. In respect of Confucianism they perform (with zeal and sincerity) the traditional rites of ancestor-worship,

<sup>1</sup> See Maspero's *Dawn of Civilisation*, edited by A. H. Sayce, translated by M. L. McClure (4th ed., 1901).

<sup>2</sup> *The Ideals of the Far East* (John Murray: 1903).



and with respect to Buddhism they support (with less zeal and less sincerity) a few priests to burn incense for them on stated days before the image of the Buddha or some favourite *p'u-sa* such as the "Goddess of Mercy": but in other respects Taoism may be said to be the religion that monopolises the largest share of their attention. The greater number of temples in the Territory are Taoist—excluding the Ancestral Temples (*Chia Miao*), which are not open to the public. Most of these Taoist edifices are poor in outward appearance and their interiors are often dirty and evil-smelling; while the images of the numerous Taoist deities are of cheap manufacture and tawdry in ornament. A casual visitor might suppose the gods were left entirely to themselves; for he may go through a dozen temples and not find a single worshipper or a single priest. But if he scrutinises the altars he will find, amid the dust and cobwebs, the ashes of incense-sticks and sometimes the remains of little offerings in the shape of cakes or sweetmeats,—just enough to show that the gods are not quite forgotten. It is only the largest temples that have resident priests; the smaller ones are either in charge of apprentices or pupil-priests or are visited from time to time (as on occasions of annual festivals or theatrical shows) by priests who exercise spiritual superintendence over a group of temples scattered over a considerable area.

The Taoist priests as a class are neither well-educated nor zealous in discharge of their simple duties, but it would be a mistake to suppose that they are all abjectly lazy or energetic only in vice and crime. The Weihaiwei priests are as a rule fairly respectable in private life; one of them has done and is doing really good work by inducing people to cure themselves of the opium habit. A Taoist temple is generally the property of a group of villages and the "living" is in their gift. When a vacancy occurs in a "living," a new priest is selected by the *hui-shou*

or committee of elders who transact most of the public business of the villages concerned, and the appointment is absolutely within their discretion. But once a priest has been appointed it is (or was) as difficult to turn him out as it is to remove a clergyman from his benefice in England. In Weihaiwei the usual procedure for getting rid of a disreputable priest (whether Taoist or Buddhist) is to present a petition to the magistrate, setting forth the reasons why the priest's continued residence in the locality is considered undesirable. The British Government, needless to say, makes no difficulty about his prompt expulsion as soon as satisfactory evidence against him is forthcoming.

Some of the priests of Weihaiwei are office-bearers in the *Tsai Li* Sect—a "total abstinence" society (in some places semi-political in character) which has claimed a large membership in the Weihaiwei district ever since the days of the military colonists. There are gradations of rank among the Taoist priests, but as a rule each is practically independent of the rest. The Taoist "Pope" himself—the dispenser of amulets and charms who resides in the Dragon-Tiger Mountains (Lung-hu Shan) of southern Kiangsi—has no direct authority over the priests of eastern Shantung, or if such authority exists in theory it is not exercised in practice. The official duties of the priests consist in very little more than looking after the temple buildings, seeing to the repair of the images when their clay arms and legs fall off (this is a duty they often shirk), and calling the attention of the deities to the presence of lay visitors who have brought offerings and desire to offer up prayers. Their services as magicians and retailers of charms are also invoked from time to time by private persons.

Men and women (especially women) pay occasional visits to the temples when they wish to implore the aid of a favourite deity in connection with some family matter such as the approaching birth of a child, or



some hazardous business venture, or the illness of a relative; and in such cases they often make vows to the effect that if their prayers are granted they will make certain additional offerings of money and incense.

Apart from these visits the temples are usually deserted except on one or two annual occasions such as the celebration of a local festival. The temple then becomes one of the centres of attraction—indeed in all probability it is a god's birthday that is being celebrated—and its precincts are thronged from morning to night by crowds of well-dressed men and women and children, eager to register their vows or make their petitions. The worshippers knock their heads on the ground as an acknowledgment of humility and powerlessness, while the priest strikes a tinkling bronze bowl with a view to awaking the god from his slumbers. In front of every image stand jars containing sticks of burning incense, sending up clouds of fragrant smoke. The courtyard resounds with fire-crackers and bombs which are supposed to frighten away any wandering spirits of evil. Dense fumes arise from heaps of burning paper representing money, prayers and charms, all of which, through the spiritualisation wrought by fire, are expected to reach the immaterial region of the unseen spirits.

In front of the temple stands the open-air stage where a group of masked or painted actors, clad in robes resplendent with colour and gleaming with gold embroidery, strive by means of extravagant gestures and high-pitched voices to interpret, for the benefit of a dense crowd of eager sightseers, their conception of some fantastic old-world legend or some tragic episode in the bygone history of China.

To enumerate all the gods and goddesses, great and small, that crowd the Taoist pantheon would be tedious. Popular Taoism provides deities or spiritual patrons for all the forces of nature, diseases (from

devil-possession to toothache), wealth and rank and happiness, war, old age, death, childbirth, towns and villages, trades, mountains and rivers and seas, lakes and canals, heaven and hell, sun, moon and stars, roads and places where there are no roads, clouds and thunder, every separate part and organ of the human body, and indeed for almost everything that is cognisable by the senses and a great deal that is not. It need hardly be said that no Taoist temple in existence contains images of all these spiritual personages, or a hundredth part of them. Each locality possesses its own favourites.

The *Ts'ai Shên* or God of Wealth is popular in Weihaiwei no less than elsewhere. He has become so important a deity to the Chinese that though he belongs to Taoism the Buddhists have been compelled to find room for him in their temples in order to attract worshippers who might otherwise go elsewhere. China's guests from the Western hemisphere have sometimes selected the "god of wealth" as a mark for special scorn and ridicule, though why they should do so is not quite apparent, inasmuch as the devotion to money-getting is quite as strong and prevalent among Englishmen and Germans and Americans as it is among the Chinese. Moreover, after a careful consideration of the kind of prayers that are addressed to the god of wealth and the popular attitude towards him and his gifts, I am satisfied that he is merely regarded as the dispenser in moderate quantities of the ordinary good things of life. The farmer who prays to *Ts'ai Shên* in the local temple does so in the hope that the god will enable him to sell his crops for fair prices so that he may continue to bring up his family amid modest prosperity. It is very much as if he were to say "Give us this day our daily bread": in fact he sometimes uses almost those very words.

The tradesman who burns incense daily in front of a strip of paper inscribed with the name of the god



of wealth does so because of "old custom," or from a vague idea that "it cannot possibly do harm and may bring some good luck," or from a more definite religious idea that without some support from the unseen powers—of which Ts'ai Shên is taken as a representative—his business will not prosper. The people of Weihaiwei have a very humble idea of what constitutes wealth. A man was described to me in an official petition as a "lord of wealth"—a common expression for a rich man. I had occasion to make enquiries into the state of this person's finances, and found that his total possessions amounted in value to about two thousand dollars Mexican—less than two hundred pounds. This was all the wealth he was "lord" of. The Chinese Buddhists—in spite of the admission of the Taoist god of wealth into their temples—have always, in their tracts and sermons, sternly discouraged the pursuit of wealth for its own sake. There is a saying which one meets with constantly in a certain class of Buddhistic work: The mean-minded man devotes his bodily powers to the heaping-up of money (that is, he regards money as an end in itself); the gentleman uses what money he has to develop his character (that is, he regards money as a means to an end).

Among other popular Taoist deities in Weihaiwei are the *San Kuan* or Three Mandarins, who are supposed to have a kind of ghostly superintendence over sky, earth and water. The three together form a trinity-in-unity, and as such are known as the *San Kuan Ta Ti*—literally, the Three-Officials-Great-God.

Several villages contain little tower-shaped shrines harbouring the image of the God of Literature, or rather of Literary Composition, who is supposed to reside in a constellation of six stars called Wên-ch'ang, forming part of Ursa Major. This deity, who takes his name from the constellation, receives the homage of literary men who aim at an official career, and is supposed to have appeared in several human

incarnations, beginning with one Chang Chung in the Chou dynasty. Like many other gods of China he is thus nothing more nor less than a deified man.

Kuan Ti, the God of War, is also a conspicuous figure in many temples, and he is officially "worshipped" in the cities in the second months of spring and autumn. He is one of the mightiest of all the Taoist gods, though his career as a deity has been quite a short one. He also (in the second century A.D.) was an ordinary mortal—a great soldier and hero named Kuan Yü, who performed many acts of valour at a time when China was given up to internecine strife. Long after his death he was canonised, but it was not till near the end of the sixteenth century that one of the Ming emperors raised him to what may be called divine rank. His position in China is equivalent to that of the Japanese Hachiman, who is also a deified human being. Honours have been heaped upon Kuan Ti by the present dynasty, and he has been raised to a theoretical equality with Confucius. Had the Boxers succeeded in driving all foreigners out of China it is possible that he (or the deified Empress-Dowager herself) might have been raised to a position of something approaching pre-eminence among the gods of China.

The walled city of Weihaiwei has, of course, its Kuan Ti temple, as we have seen in connection with the story of the great fishbone found by one of the Liu family.<sup>1</sup> In this temple there is a very large and heavy weapon which might be described as a kind of sword or spear. Weapons of this type are common enough in China, though when of such great size and weight as that in the Kuan Ti temple they are intended more for show than for use, and accordingly find a more appropriate position in a temple or an official yamên than on a field of battle. The Weihaiwei sword—if such it may be called—is of sufficient fame to be specially mentioned in the local Annals. It is

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 26-7.





IMAGE OF KUAN TI, WEIHAIWEI.





there described, accurately enough, as being more than a *chang* in length (say about twelve English feet) and one hundred catties in weight (say one hundred and thirty-three English pounds). The blade is made of iron, and there is much skilful and delicate ornamentation in copper. "No other temple," says the Chronicle, "has anything like it. Old folks have handed down the tradition that it came out of the sea with a deep rolling sound (something like the lowing of cattle). The people of the neighbourhood heard the sound and went near the strange object. When they lifted it up and examined it, lo! it was a great sword. So they carried it off and presented it reverentially to the spirit of Kuan Ti." The god of war, obviously, was the proper person to possess a weapon which no human arm was strong enough to wield. The written account gives us no clear statement of how this Chinese Excalibur came out of the sea: but the present warden of the temple tells a somewhat prosaic story to the effect that it was found along with sundry other articles, including some arrows and two copper bells, in an open boat that was cast ashore in the Weihaiwei harbour. The arrows are still in the Kuan Ti temple; the bells are said to have been sent off to Wên-têng city, where presumably they still remain.

The Kuan Ti temple is said to have been the scene of at least one miracle. Once upon a time a Taoist priest, named Wu K'ao-yü, who was in charge of the temple, went out for an evening stroll. Darkness came on before he returned, and he then remembered that he had forgotten to light the altar lamps. He hunted about for some means of striking a light, but found none; so he decided to go to one of his neighbours and borrow a candle. He was grumbling at himself for his carelessness when suddenly, in his presence, the altar was illuminated by four brilliant lights. When he observed that they neither flickered nor went out he prostrated himself in reverence and

repeated part of the liturgy. If the god could provide lights for himself, he argued, there was obviously no necessity for troubling the neighbours, so he went to bed like a sensible man, leaving the lamps to look after themselves.

The question arises, did he ever take the trouble to light the lamps again? To this the chronicler gives no reply. The priest was possibly gifted with powers which in these days might be termed mediumistic, for this was not his only remarkable experience of the kind. On one occasion he beheld, in a midnight vision, three elaborately dressed men, lively and active in manner and of handsome appearance. They looked at the priest and all cried out together, "Come quickly and save us!" This remark was twice repeated, and the speakers then vanished. The priest immediately arose, and without choosing his path allowed himself to be led by unseen influences down to the sea-beach. There he saw, lying at the edge of the surf, three copper images. Recognising them at once as images of the Three Prefects of the Sea-King's Palace, he picked them up reverently and deposited them in the principal hall of the temple. Rumours of the strange discovery soon spread far and wide, and crowds of worshippers came to the Kuan Ti temple to see the images for themselves and—incidentally—to make suitable offerings to the highly-favoured priest.

A much smaller deity than Kuan Ti but of greater importance to the people in their everyday life is the City-god—the *Ch'êng Huang*. Every walled city in China has a *Ch'êng Huang Lao-yeh* (His Worship the City-god) who acts as its guardian deity. On certain fixed days, such as the first and fifteenth of every month and on occasions of special dangers or disasters, the local officials visit the temple dedicated to this deity and burn incense in front of his image, which is generally clad in real robes and is of full human size. A similar ceremonious visit also takes place when a



new magistrate arrives in the city and takes over the seals of office.

In many countries there was once a barbarous custom whereby human beings were sacrificed at the building of the gates or towers of a city wall and buried below the foundations.<sup>1</sup> Human blood was believed to add strength and stability to the wall, and the sacrificed human being was supposed to become its spiritual guardian. Sacrifices of this kind are believed to have taken place as recently as 1857, at the foundation of the Burmese city of Mandalay. Not only city-walls but bridges, temples, river-dykes, and indeed all buildings of importance were supposed to be enormously strengthened by the blood and bones of specially-slain human victims. In some cases, apparently, the wretched victims were buried alive. There is some reason for believing that human sacrifices occurred at the construction of the Great Wall of China in the third century B.C.

In some parts of the Empire there is still a curiously-prevalent belief to the effect that Governments and

<sup>1</sup> This detestable custom was practised in many European countries as well as in Africa, Polynesia, Borneo, Japan, Indo-China and India. [See Tylor's *Primitive Culture* (4th ed.), vol. i. pp. 104 *seq.*; Lyall's *Asiatic Studies* (2nd ed.), First Series, p. 25, Second Series, pp. 312-13; Grant Allen, *The Evolution of the Idea of God*, p. 265 (see footnote).] Prof. S. R. Driver in one of his Schweich Lectures (delivered before the British Academy on April 2, 1908) described some recent archaeological discoveries of great interest in Palestine and the neighbouring countries. Some of these discoveries clearly prove that foundation-sacrifices existed in those regions. At Gezer, Taanach and Megiddo were actually discovered the skeletons of numbers of miserable people who had been buried under the corners of walls or under towers. That the custom of sacrificing boys and girls was practised in ancient Persia we know from Herodotus (Book vii. 114). It is not so generally known that it was apparently practised in the British Isles not merely in savage times but after the introduction of Christianity and even in connection with the foundation of ecclesiastical buildings. According to a legend which may be founded on fact, Oran, the companion of St. Columba, was buried under the foundations of the great monastery of Iona. For this and many other cases see G. Laurence Gomme's *Folk-lore Relics of Early Village Life*, pp. 24-58.

officials are in the habit of taking a toll of human life when they have any great engineering work on hand, and bad characters or misguided patriots who wished to bring odium upon foreigners have been known to circulate stories that Chinese children were being kidnapped by Western barbarians for the purpose of burying them under a railway or a fort or a dock or some great public building. There was a scare of the kind among a section of the poorer classes of Hongkong about eight or nine years ago, and in the little village known to Europeans as Aberdeen, on the Hongkong island, there was, in consequence, a small panic. A white ship, said the people, had been seen coming by night into Aberdeen harbour, the object of those on board being to kidnap Chinese boys and girls for purposes of foundation-sacrifices. Yet the people of that village had been under direct British rule for about sixty years! It would be interesting to know whether the Ch'êng Huang or City-god was originally a sacrificed human-being, but the Chinese will not admit such to be the case and it is difficult to procure evidence.

The Chinese of to-day profess to think that no such barbarous custom can ever have taken place in their country, but they are unquestionably wrong in this belief: indeed there is some reason to believe that the custom is not yet extinct in China.<sup>1</sup> As for the barbarity of the practice, the Chinese admit that the custom of slaughtering men and women at funerals, and even burying them alive in the tombs of kings and high officials, became extinct only in modern

<sup>1</sup> The Rev. Ernest Box, writing on "Shanghai Folk-lore" in the *Journal of the China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (vol. xxxv. 1901-2, p. 123), mentions that human sacrifices are said to have taken place in the building of one of the silk-filatures at Soochow. "I am also informed," he says, "that in the potteries in Kiangsi a new furnace is secretly consecrated by the shedding of a child's blood, as a sacrifice to ward off evil influences or accidents." Mr. Box seems to be inclined to ascribe the custom to the desire of propitiating the spirits of the earth.



times.<sup>1</sup> Whatever may be the truth with regard to the origin of the Ch'êng Huang, the popular belief is that he is a kind of ghostly magistrate, and in modern times he is generally regarded as the spirit of a former magistrate who on account of his blameless life or devotion to the interests of the people died "in the odour of sanctity."

Changes and promotions sometimes take place among the city-gods just as among the living members of the Chinese civil service. The world of the dead is supposed to be a reduplication of the world of men. One might almost imagine that some rather dull-witted Chinese philosopher had heard, and grievously failed to understand, the Platonic doctrine of Ideas, and had then applied his new learning to the solution, by Chinese methods, of the mystery of the land from which no traveller returns. Provinces, cities, villages, officials and yamên-runners, houses and fields and cattle, and indeed all material things were and are vaguely supposed to have their immaterial counterparts in the world of shades. It is necessary to emphasise the word "vaguely," for no well-educated and very few illiterate Chinese seem to hold this belief with dogmatic definiteness, and indeed they are usually ready to join Europeans in criticising or deriding it. But it is a theory that certainly colours the traditional Chinese views of death and the beyond.

The city-god takes rank according to the status of the living magistrate: a prefectural city is superior to that of a district-magistracy, hence the city-god of the former takes precedence of the city-god of the latter. The deity that presides over the destinies of Weihaiwei city is thus very humbly placed among the hundreds and thousands of deities of his class, for Weihaiwei is only the seat of a *hsün-chien*<sup>2</sup>—the mere deputy of a district-magistrate. It is probable, too, that just as the Weihaiwei *hsün-chien* has become an

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 225, 274.

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 53-4.

even less important person than formerly, since the establishment of British rule over the territory that was once under his supervision, so his ghostly counterpart has been obliged to assume a humbler position than before in the ranks of the minor deities. Yet if local legends are to be credited the Weihai city-god was once quite competent to assert his authority and defend his reputation. It is generally supposed that a deity of this class has control only over the people of his own city and its subject territory: beyond those limits his powers do not extend. But that the Weihai god insisted at one time on respectful treatment even from strangers is proved by the following incident. In the seventeenth century a certain man named Chao, a native of the P'êng-lai district in the prefecture of Têng-chou, had come to Weihaiwei to transact business. The weather being hot he went into the Ch'êng Huang miao (temple of the city-god) for an afternoon nap, and sat down with his back to the god's image. A bystander, who was a local man, hastened to point out that his attitude was disrespectful. "It is not proper," he said, "to sit with your back to the god. Wouldn't it be wiser to turn sideways?" Chao smiled scornfully. "I am a P'êng-lai man; your god has no power over me. I propose to stay where I am."

Soon afterwards he fell asleep. He slumbered long and deeply, and in the middle of the night he suddenly woke up and to his horror found himself bound hand and foot to one of the rafters of the roof, and there unseen hands proceeded to subject him to an unmerciful beating. The more he howled the faster and heavier came the blows. When he had suffered excruciating pain for what seemed to him a long time, the thongs that bound him were mysteriously loosened by ghostly fingers and he was lowered to the floor. Then the flogging began again, and the wretched Chao was driven screaming out of the temple precincts. Outside the gates he fell un-





THE BUDDHA OF KU SHAN TEMPLE

(see p. 402).



Photo by Ah Fong, Weihaiwei.

THE CITY-GOD OF WEIHAIVEI (see p. 368).





conscious to the ground. When he came to himself he was hardly able to move; his body was still bruised and scarred, and when he tried to drag one leg after the other he writhed in agony. After many weary days the pains left him, but his contempt for alien gods was a thing of the past: he had become a grave and religious man. Before leaving the city on his return journey he took care to prove his remorse by presenting the outraged deity with a beautiful paper horse, which was of course despatched to the spirit-world through the usual agency of fire.

There is a quainter and more touching story told of the city-god of the neighbouring district-city of Jung-ch'êng. The Chinese, as we have seen,<sup>1</sup> regard three days in the year as specially consecrated to the spirits of the dead, just as there are three special holidays for the living. On each of the spirit-festivals the Ch'êng Huang is expected to hold a formal inspection of his city. His image is accordingly brought out of the dingy temple in which it usually reposes, placed in an official chair, and carried in a noisy and not very solemn procession through the principal streets of the town. The story goes that during one of these periodical excursions a young girl, a member of a well-known local family, was watching the procession with the keenest interest. As the god's palanquin passed the spot where she was standing, she saw the image—or believed she saw it—deliberately turn its face in her direction and smile at her with a look of friendly interest. Full of excitement the girl went home and poured out her tale in the ear of her mother. The good lady treated the story as a kind of joke and laughed gaily at her daughter's fancy. "It is clear," she said, "that Ch'êng Huang Lao-yeh wants you for his wife: so off you go to him."

A few days passed by and the girl became seriously

<sup>1</sup> See p. 192.

ill. A doctor was called in, but all he did was to look wise, give her a charm to hang over her door, and make her swallow some disagreeable medicine. In less than a month after the meeting with the city-god the girl was dead. During the night following her death her mother had a strange dream. She was visited by the spirit of her dead daughter, who told her that she was now well and happy, for she had become the bride of the Ch'êng Huang. Needless to say the dream soon became the common talk of the neighbours, through whom it reached the ears of the district-magistrate. After evidence had been given and duly corroborated it was officially decided that the Ch'êng Huang's will had manifested itself in an unmistakable manner and that to thwart it would bring certain disaster on the city. The girl's body was therefore buried with much pomp and ceremony within the temple grounds, her image, robed in real silks, was installed in the central pavilion beside that of the god himself, and she received formal recognition as the Ch'êng Huang's consort.

As time went on the dead girl began to acquire some local fame as a healer of various diseases, and persons who believed she had cured their ailments took to buying little votive offerings such as tiny pairs of shoes, hair-combs, ear-rings, and other trinkets such as Chinese ladies love. These were all stored up in the temple, where many of them may still be seen. The citizens of Jung-ch'êng who tell the story to strangers and fear it will not be believed are in the habit of mentioning a prosaic little fact which, they think, must banish all doubt. Every morning, they say, a basin of clean water is taken by the priest into the inner room which is supposed to serve as the sleeping-chamber of the Ch'êng Huang and his wife. Having put the basin on its stand the priest discreetly withdraws. In half an hour he returns and takes the basin away: and lo! the water is clean no longer. This realistic touch is rather characteristic of Chinese



tales of wonder. Whatever the real origin of the legend may be there is no doubt that the city-god of Jung-ch'êng does share the honours of local worship with a female spirit whose image rests beside his own; and if any one questions whether she was ever a living human being he may ask for an introduction to the descendants of the very family to which she belonged,—for their name is Ts'ai and their home is in one of the city suburbs, where they flourish to this day.<sup>1</sup>

Just as every town has its Ch'êng Huang Lao-yeh, so every village has its T'u Ti Lao-yeh or Old Father T'u Ti. He is of course inferior in rank to a Ch'êng Huang, and instead of possessing an ornate temple and being represented by a full-sized robed and bearded image he has no better resting-place, as a rule, than a little stone shrine three or four feet high. In the case of the Weihaiwei villages this shrine is generally situated on the roadside close by the village to which it belongs. The ordinary villager's ceremonial visits to the local T'u Ti miao or temple of the village-god are not very frequent. If he or any member of his family is sick he will beseech the T'u Ti to grant a restoration to health, and on such occasions, or after a cure has been effected, he will very often hang little flags of scarlet cloth—they are often mere rags—on a stick or pole in front of the shrine. The popular T'u Ti of a large village sometimes possesses a dozen of these simple offerings at one time. The death of a villager must be formally announced to the T'u Ti, whose duty it is to act as a kind of guide to the dead man when he finds himself for the first time in the bewildering world of ghosts. It is a common sight and a somewhat pathetic one to see a long row of wailing mourners, clad in loose and

<sup>1</sup> It is probable that similar stories are told of other city-gods, for the Rev. Ernest Box (*J.R.A.S. (China Branch)*, vol. xxxiv. p. 109) mentions a case in connection with Lutien, a place a few miles north-west of Shanghai.

unhemmed sackcloth and with hair dishevelled, wending their way along the village street in the direction of the shrine of the T'u Ti to report the death of a relative or fellow-villager. The T'u Ti is, in fact, a kind of registrar of deaths: the unseen record kept by him in the underworld and the family record kept by the people in their homes or in their ancestral temples, are sufficient to satisfy all Chinese requirements in the matter of death-registration.<sup>1</sup> Births are not reported to the T'u Ti, who, being concerned chiefly with the world of spirits, is not supposed to take any special interest in the multiplication of living men. It is to the ancestors that a child's birth (if the child be a boy) is naturally supposed to bring joy and consolation.

Beings like the Ch'êng Huang and T'u Ti and Hearth-god<sup>2</sup> and many other popular deities may be all regarded as included in the list of Taoist gods, but as far as ceremony or ritual goes they are really independent of Taoism: that is to say, no priestly intervention is necessary between the god and the person who prays. If the rites of Taoism and the major Taoist gods were expelled from the land, minor deities such as those mentioned might continue to attract just as much or just as little reverence as they do at present; similarly ancestor-worship would not necessarily be affected by the official abolition of the cult of Confucius.

The fact that the T'u Ti is supposed to interest himself in such matters as the death of individuals seems to suggest that he must have been in origin an ancestral god: but I cannot find any trustworthy evidence that this is so, though it seems that in some cases at least he (like the Ch'êng Huang) was a human being posthumously raised to quasi-divine rank. It

<sup>1</sup> As the functions of the T'u Ti are, on a reduced scale, similar to those of the Ch'êng Huang, it follows that in walled towns it is the Ch'êng Huang who receives reports of death.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 193.





SHRINE TO THE GOD OF LITERATURE (see p. 361).  
p. 372]



A T'U TI SHRINE (see p. 372).





is noteworthy as bearing on this point that no village in Weihaiwei, or elsewhere so far as I am aware, possesses more than one T'u Ti, though there may be two or more "surnames" or clans represented in the village; moreover, when a man migrates from one village to another he changes his T'u Ti, although his connection with his old village in respect of ancestral worship and such matters remains unimpaired. The T'u Ti, in fact, appears to be a local divinity who holds his position irrespective of the movements of families and changes of surnames. It may be that he is regarded as representing in some mysterious way the first settler in the locality concerned, or the first builder of the village. The Chinese T'u Ti seems to bear a considerable resemblance to the Uji-gami of Japan. As the name *Uji* implies, this deity was evidently at one time regarded as a clan-deity or tribal ancestor. But as a Japanese authority has told us, "the word *Uji-gami* or clan-god is now used in another sense, namely in the sense of the local tutelary god or the patron-god of a man's birthplace or domicile."<sup>1</sup> Dr. Aston says that the Uji-gami having originally been the patron-gods of particular families "became simply the local deities of the district where one was born."<sup>2</sup> It seems at least possible that the history of the T'u Ti has been similar to that of the Uji-Gami.

Perhaps Greek and Roman religion may help in throwing some light on the subject. Just as we find the ancestral cult forming a prominent element in the religion of Greece and Rome, so we find traces of the existence of something like a T'u Ti. Every family had its own altar and its own gods (namely its deceased ancestors), and every phratría or group of families "had a common altar erected in honour of a common deity who was supposed to be more power-

<sup>1</sup> *Ancestor Worship and Japanese Law*, by Mr. Nobushige Hozumi, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> *Shinto*, p. 10.

ful than the deities of the households taken separately."<sup>1</sup>

Like the Ch'êng Huang of the city of Jung-ch'êng, the T'u Ti of the Weihaiwei district are very often if not almost invariably provided with wives, who are known as T'u Ti P'o. The T'u Ti and his lady are represented by rough stone effigies, about a foot in height, which are placed side by side within the little stone shrine; or sometimes the lady has a separate shrine, of smaller size, beside that of her husband. Some T'u Ti are attended by two T'u Ti P'o. On making inquiries into the reason for this at a village where the T'u Ti was thus distinguished, I was informed that the lady on his left (the place of honour) was his wife and the lady on his right his concubine. It was pointed out that the concubine's image was only about half the size of that of the wife, which was quite as it should be in view of her inferior status. Two explanations were offered as to why this particular T'u Ti had been allowed to increase his household in this manner: one was that he had won the lady on his right by gambling for her, the other was that the T'u Ti had appeared to one of the villagers in a dream and begged him to provide him with a concubine as he had grown tired of his wife. The villager called on the local image-maker the very next morning, the image-maker went to the shrine and took measurements, and in a few days a nice new concubine was placed by the T'u Ti's side. Whether the dreamer's material position underwent any marked improvement about this time is not recorded.

It has been mentioned that little red flags are often hung on a stick or pole close by the T'u Ti's shrine on behalf of persons whose ailments the T'u Ti is supposed to have cured. At first sight one might suppose that the flags were intended as thank-

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Sir G. W. Cox, "Religion of the Ancient Greek and Latin Tribes," in *Religious Systems of the World* (8th ed.), p. 224.



offerings to the T'u Ti, but though they certainly are regarded as such at the present day, I am strongly inclined to believe that they have a quite different origin. Similar customs in other parts of the world irresistibly suggest the idea that the piece of cloth was originally regarded as the vehicle of the disease which was supposed to have been expelled from the human subject.

Dr. Tylor refers to "that well-known conception of a disease or evil influence as an individual being, which may be not merely conveyed by an infected object (though this of course may have much to do with the idea) but may be removed by actual transfer from the patient into some other animal or object."<sup>1</sup> He goes on to consider many examples of the practical working of this conception, and draws special attention to the belief common to many parts of the world (though China is not mentioned) that disease can be banished by driving it into a rag and hanging it on a tree:—"In Thuringia it is considered that a string of rowan-berries, a rag, or any small article, touched by a sick person and then hung on a bush beside some forest path, imparts the malady to any person who may touch this article in passing, and frees the sick person from the disease. This gives great probability to Captain Burton's suggestion that the rags, locks of hair, and what not, hung on trees near sacred places by the superstitious from Mexico to India and from Ethiopia to Ireland, are deposited there as actual receptacles of disease; the African 'devil's trees' and the sacred trees of Sindh, hung with rags through which votaries have transferred their complaints, being typical cases of a practice surviving in lands of higher culture."<sup>2</sup>

There are traces of a belief of this kind in Japan, and

<sup>1</sup> *Primitive Culture* (4th ed.), vol. ii. pp. 148-9. See also Frazer's *Golden Bough* (2nd ed.), vol. iii. pp. 26 *seq.*, and W. G. Black's *Folk Medicine*, pp. 34 *seq.*

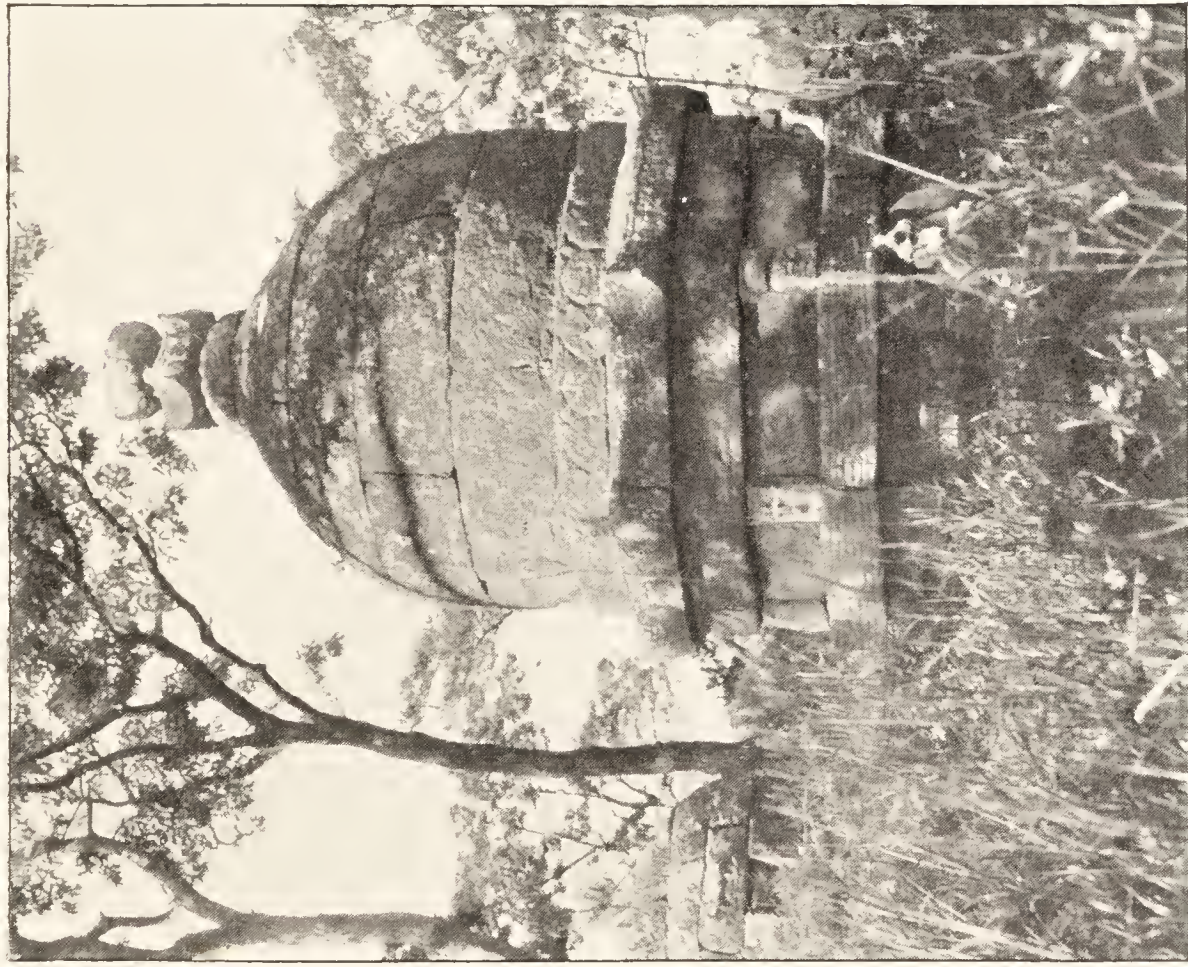
<sup>2</sup> *Primitive Culture* (4th ed.), vol. ii. p. 150.

I have observed many proofs of it also in the border country between China and Tibet. There is good reason, I think, to believe that the custom of hanging rags in front of the T'u Ti's shrine has a similar origin. The fact that the rags are usually hung up after the patient has already recovered merely goes to show that the primitive meaning of the act has become obscured.

It is probable that the T'u Ti originally had nothing to do with the matter. Of what possible use to him could be a number of small pieces of ragged cloth, unless indeed he wished to make himself a patch-work quilt? But as soon as the significance of the suspended rag had been forgotten, the idea may very naturally have grown up that the practice was essentially a religious one and ought to be associated with some god: and what god so suitable as the local guardian-spirit—the T'u Ti—whose shrine was always conveniently close at hand, and who was supposed to take a personal interest in every villager? As soon as the rag came to be regarded as a votive-offering the Chinese would naturally select red—the colour of joy and good luck—as most acceptable to the god and most likely to win his favour. This theory will perhaps gain in reasonableness if it is explained that the uneducated Chinese of the north—including Weihaiwei—do actually believe to this day in the possibility of transferring certain diseases from a human being to an inanimate object. They declare that if a sick person rubs a piece of cloth over the part of his body in which he feels pain, and then throws the cloth away at a cross-road,<sup>1</sup> he will feel the pain

<sup>1</sup> Quite an interesting chapter might be written about various beliefs connected with cross-roads. See, for example, the superstition referred to in Plato's *Laws*, quoted by Dr. Frazer in *The Golden Bough* (2nd ed.), vol. iii. p. 20; and the Bohemian prescription for fever: "Take an empty pot, go with it to a cross-road, throw it down, and run away. The first person who kicks against the pot will catch your fever and you will be cured." (*Op. cit.*, p. 22.) Again, of the Dyaks we are told that they "fasten rags of their clothes on trees at cross-roads,





YÜAN DYNASTY GRAVES (see p. 257).

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A T'U TI SHRINE, SHOWING RAG-POLES AND TREE  
(see p. 377).





no more. Wayfarers who see such cloths lying on the road will on no account touch them, as they are supposed to harbour the disease that has been expelled from the human patient.<sup>1</sup> There are similar beliefs in Korea<sup>2</sup> and elsewhere in Asia, and also in several countries of Europe.<sup>3</sup>

To confine ourselves to Weihaiwei, it should be mentioned that the sticks or poles in front of the T'u Ti's shrine to which the rags are fastened are inserted perpendicularly in the ground in front or at the side of the shrine, and are often made to represent, on a miniature scale, the well-known mast-like poles that stand outside the gates of official yamêns and the houses and family temples of the literary "aristocracy." But sometimes the shrine is shaded by the branches of a tree, and in such cases the rags may occasionally be seen hanging on the tree itself. It is possible that here we have something like a blending of three old beliefs or superstitions: the cult of the local tutelary god, faith in the magical expulsion of sickness, and the worship of sacred trees.

Tree-worship is one of the bypaths of Chinese religion. It is not connected, except as it were accidentally, with Confucianism, Taoism or Buddhism. But the bypath is worth exploring if only because it leads to a region of folk-lore and myth that is common to both China and Europe. The idea that fearing for their health if they neglect the custom." (Tylor's *Primitive Culture* (4th ed.), vol. ii. p. 223.) Still more remarkable is it to find a similar belief in England. "Lancashire wise men tell us, 'for warts, rub them with a cinder, and this, tied up in paper and dropped where four roads meet, will transfer the warts to whoever opens the parcel.'" (W. G. Black's *Folk Medicine*, p. 41. This author mentions the existence of the same superstition in Germany.)

<sup>1</sup> For superstitions of the kind in the Shanghai district, see Rev. E. Box's "Shanghai Folk-lore" in *J.R.A.S. (China Branch)*, vol. xxxiv. pp. 124-5. For a Chinese cross-road superstition see the same article, p. 130; and see Dennys's *Folk-lore of China*, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> See Mrs. Bishop's *Korea and Her Neighbours*, vol. ii. pp. 143 seq., and *Folk-lore*, September 1900, p. 329.

<sup>3</sup> See Frazer's *Golden Bough* (2nd ed.), vol. iii. p. 21.

certain trees are animated by more or less powerful spirits, or the distinct and still earlier view that certain trees are themselves the bodies of living divinities, is a belief that can be traced to almost every part of the world. It existed in ancient Rome,<sup>1</sup> where the sacred fig-tree of Romulus was an object of popular devotion; it existed among the ancient Jews at Hebron, Shechem, Ophrah and at Beersheba;<sup>2</sup> it existed in Pelasgian Attica and neighbouring regions thousands of years B.C.;<sup>3</sup> it existed in India in pre-Buddhistic and post-Buddhistic times—witness the history of the famous Bo-tree of Anuradhapura in Ceylon, to which pilgrims still flock in their thousands; it flourishes to this day in all the countries of Indo-China; it is to be found in Korea and in many islands of the Pacific; indeed traces of it exist in every part of the world, including western Europe and the American continent. No wonder Dr. Tylor says of “direct and absolute tree-worship” that it may lie “very wide and deep in the early history of religion.”<sup>4</sup> Its extraordinary vitality in Europe may be estimated by the fact that though the early Christian missionaries on the Continent and in Britain anathematised it as idolatrous and endeavoured to stamp it out—sometimes adopting the method of cutting down a sacred grove and using the timber for building a Christian chapel<sup>5</sup>—traces of the belief

<sup>1</sup> See T. R. Glover's *Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire* (Methuen & Co., 1909), p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> See the Rev. A. W. Oxford's “Ancient Judaism” in *Religious Systems of the World* (8th ed.), p. 55. He remarks that the sacred trees at these places “were always evergreen trees as being the best symbols of life; ‘green’ is the constant adjective applied to them by the prophets. The name used for them—*ela* or *elon*—shows that they were considered to be divine beings.” As regards the choice of *evergreen* trees, see above, pp. 262-4.

<sup>3</sup> See also Mr. A. B. Cook's articles on “Zeus, Apollo and the Oak” in *The Classical Review* for 1903 and 1904.

<sup>4</sup> *Primitive Culture* (4th ed.), vol. ii. p. 221. The whole subject is discussed pp. 214-29.

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 228.



in sacred trees actually survive in popular traditions and local customs up to the present time right across the Euro-Asiatic continent from England and Sweden to China, Malaya and the islands of Japan.<sup>1</sup> Folk-lore has much to tell us about talking trees, and trees that could plead for their own lives when the wood-cutter approached them with his axe. In 1606 Lincolnshire was reported to possess "an ash-tree that sighed and groaned."<sup>2</sup>

Apart from all consideration of the origin of may-poles, some faint traces of a surviving belief in holy trees have been found in recent years in Yorkshire.<sup>3</sup> In Switzerland it is a common belief of the people that walnut-trees are tenanted by spirits.<sup>4</sup> Dr. Frazer tells us that "down to 1859 there stood a sacred larch-tree at Nauders in the Tyrol which was thought to bleed whenever it was cut. . . . So sacred was the tree that no one would gather fuel or cut timber near it; and to curse, scold or quarrel in its neighbourhood was regarded as a crying sin which would be supernaturally punished on the spot. Angry disputants were often hushed with the whisper, 'Don't, the sacred tree is here.'"<sup>5</sup> The belief in trees animated by some

<sup>1</sup> "Trees of great size and age are worshipped in almost every village in Japan. They are girt with honorary cinctures of straw-rope and have tiny shrines erected before them."—DR. ASTON'S *Shinto*, p. 45. See also W. W. Skeat's *Malay Magic*, p. 67.

<sup>2</sup> *County Folk-lore*, vol. v.: *Lincolnshire* (David Nutt, 1908).

<sup>3</sup> *County Folk-lore*, vol. ii.: *North Riding of Yorkshire*, p. 54.

<sup>4</sup> *Folk-lore Journal*, vol. i. (1883), p. 377. For tree-worship in Tuscany see Dr. J. G. Frazer's article in *Folk-lore*, Dec. 1901.

<sup>5</sup> Frazer's *Golden Bough* (2nd ed.), vol. i. pp. 173-4. For Dr. Frazer's admirable discussion of the whole subject see especially vol. i. pp. 166-232, and vol. iii. pp. 26 *seq.* See also Grant Allen's *Evolution of the Idea of God*, pp. 138 *seq.*; Philpot's *The Sacred Tree*, *passim*; Maspero's *Dawn of Civilisation* (4th ed.), pp. 121-2; H. M. Bower's *The Elevation and Procession of the Ceri at Gubbio* (David Nutt, 1897), pp. 61, 70 *seq.*, 85 *seq.*, 93 and *passim*; Griffis's *The Religions of Japan* (4th ed.), pp. 30 *seq.*; Ferguson's *Tree and Serpent Worship*, *passim*; W. W. Skeat's *Malay Magic*, pp. 52 *seq.*, 63 *seq.*, 193 *seq.*, 203 *seq.*; Reinach's *Orpheus* (Eng. tr. 1909), pp. 114, 129.

kind of divinity or inhabited by spirits is parallel with many other ancient animistic beliefs. Just as the sea has its mermaids and nymphs and the streams have their naiads and water-kelpies and the mountains their gnomes and elves, so groves and single trees have their haunting spirits, dryads or gods. At the present day the popular faith in the existence of tree-spirits is exceedingly strong in such countries as Burma, the Shan States and Siam; indeed Buddhism was obliged to compromise with the pre-Buddhistic animism of those lands to the extent of finding a place for tree-nats or tree-spirits—as well as water-nats and numerous other fairy-like beings—in its general scheme of the cosmos.

In view of the almost universal prevalence of tree-worship of some kind or other it would be strange indeed if no trace of it could be found in China. It has been said by a writer on the subject that “there is very little evidence of the existence of tree-worship among Chinese,”<sup>1</sup> but as a matter of fact the evidence for its existence (though perhaps it is not to be found to any great extent in books) is abundant and conclusive. I have myself seen “sacred trees” in at least seven provinces of China—Chihli, Shansi, Honan, Shensi, Ssüch‘uan, Fuhkien and Shantung—and I have good reason to believe they are to be found in other provinces as well.<sup>2</sup> The trees are generally seen in the neighbourhood of a village or sometimes in the middle of a village-street; their branches are usually hung with votive-offerings and lettered scrolls, and below them are sometimes placed little altars with incense-burners and small dishes of sacrificial food. Such trees are regarded with veneration, and

<sup>1</sup> Philpot's *The Sacred Tree* (Macmillan & Co., 1897), p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> As for example in Kansu. For Kiangsu see *J.R.A.S. (China Branch)*, vol. xxxiv. (1901-2), p. 116. For observations on Chinese tree-spirits see De Groot's *Religious System of China*, vol. iv. pp. 272 seq. and vol. v. pp. 653-63; and see *Folk-lore*, June 1906, p. 190; and Dennys's *Folk-lore of China*, p. 47.





THE HAUNTED TREE OF LIN-CHIA-YÜAN (see p. 381).

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their decay or accidental destruction is looked upon as a public calamity. In north China the sacred tree seems generally though not always to be a *Sophora* tree, known by the Chinese as *huai*.<sup>1</sup> But any one who wishes to be convinced that tree-worship is still a living faith in China need not travel so far as the inland provinces: it is unnecessary to go further than Weihaiwei. Close to the picturesque village of Lin-chia-yüan (The Garden of the Lin Family) is a fine old specimen of the Ginkgo or Maidenhair tree,<sup>2</sup> known by the Chinese as the *pai kuo* or "white-fruit tree." It is believed in the neighbourhood to be inhabited by the spirit of a Buddha or Bodhisatva.

Here we have an interesting example of how Buddhism utilised local legends for its own purposes and for the advancement of its own interests. Close by the tree stands an old Buddhist temple that dates from the T'ang dynasty. Had there been no priests to mould the religious ideas of the neighbouring villages into a Buddhistic form the tree would still have been regarded as the abode of a spirit, but no one would have thought of suggesting that the spirit was that of a Buddha. The devout Christian need not jeer at the harmless wiles of the Buddhist priests in this little matter, for the European monks of the Middle Ages were equally ready to seize upon local superstitions and give them a Christian interpretation. "The peasant folk-lore of Europe still knows," says Dr. Tylor, "of that old tree on the Heinzenberg near Zell, which uttered its complaint when the woodman cut it down, for in it was Our Lady, whose chapel now stands upon the spot."<sup>3</sup> Exactly the same procedure was adopted, as is well known, with regard to the sacred wells and springs of our European forefathers. It was found a simpler matter to substitute the name of a Christian saint for that of a

<sup>1</sup> The *Sophora japonica*.

<sup>2</sup> *Salisburia adiantifolia*. See p. 168.

<sup>3</sup> *Primitive Culture* (4th ed.), vol. ii. p. 221.

heathen divinity than to crush the popular superstitions altogether. "With a varnish of Christianity and sometimes the substitution of a saint's name," says the writer just quoted,<sup>1</sup> "water-worship has held its own to this day. The Bohemians will go to pray on the river-bank where a man has been drowned, and there they will cast in an offering, a loaf of new bread and a pair of wax candles." The bread, no doubt, represented the old heathen offering to the water-spirit, the candles represented the compromise with Christianity. But let us refrain from ridiculing the superstitions of "the heathen Chinese" so long as we possess such obvious relics of heathendom in our own quarter of the globe.

Signs are not wanting that the old belief in *shên shu* ("spirit-trees"), as they are called by the Chinese, is more or less rapidly decaying in this district. Certain villages, such as Chang-chia-shan, Wên-ch'üan-chai, Ho-hsi-chuang, Pao-hsin and others, possess fine old trees which, according to tradition, were once "worshipped," but are now only familiar and much-loved landmarks which the villagers would on no account allow to be removed. I do not refer only to the temple-groves and the little woods that shade the ancestral burial-grounds, for they, as we have seen,<sup>2</sup> derive their sanctity from causes not necessarily connected with tree-worship. I refer rather to the large isolated trees that one sometimes sees in or close to a village or overhanging the T'u Ti shrine. In the latter case it would be interesting to know whether it was the tree or the shrine that first possessed the site. Sometimes the little shrine is almost hidden by the low-hanging foliage of a group of trees—such trees having in all probability sprung from a parent-stem. Of the Khond tribes in British India it is said that when they settle in a new village "the sacred cotton-tree must be planted with solemn rites, and beneath it is placed the stone which en-

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 213.

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 261 *seq.*





A VILLAGE

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AT CHANG-CHIA-SHAN.





shrines the village-deity." <sup>1</sup> Whatever may have been the practice in Weihaiwei, it seems not improbable that similar rites once attended the planting of sacred trees in some parts of China.

The proximity of an ancient Buddhist temple is sufficient to explain how it is that the sacred tree of Lin-chia-yüan is supposed to be inhabited by a Buddhist spirit: but no one seems to have thought it worth while to proselytise the spirit of the most famous tree in the Territory, the *sophora* of the village of Mang-tao, which enjoys a celebrity extending far beyond the limits of the surrounding villages. Only a year or two ago a serious calamity befell the villagers of Mang-tao. During one night of dismal memory their famous tree caught fire and was destroyed. Their consternation was great, for the disaster seemed irremediable; but the local sages rose to the occasion, for they declared that the tree-spirit had grown tired of the old tree and had moved into a smaller one a few yards further up the village-street. As for the fire, it was explained as being *t'ien huo*—fire from heaven—sent purposely at the instigation of the migrated tree-spirit in order to prevent people from worshipping the wrong tree. A circumstantial story has already been invented in the village to this effect. A villager came with incense to pay his respects to the old tree which—unknown to him—was now untenanted. The tree-spirit from his new perch saw what was going on, and was much disgusted to perceive that the old tree, though he had abandoned it, was still the recipient of offerings. Grinding his branches with rage and jealousy at the vexatious spectacle, he persuaded heaven to send a mysterious wind that fanned the villager's lighted sticks of incense into a mighty flame, which speedily stripped the poor old tree of bark and foliage. Whatever the true cause of the fire may have been, the fact is indisputable that the tree was completely destroyed. Its blackened

<sup>1</sup> Tylor's *Primitive Culture* (4th ed.), vol. ii. p. 225.

trunk has been removed by the villagers, so that not a trace of the tree now remains; while its proud successor is now decorated with the rags and other offerings that once hung upon its venerable branches.

The Mang-tao tree is prayed to for many things, but especially for recovery from illness, and the rags are chiefly the offerings of grateful worshippers whose prayers have met with favourable response. It is very possible that the rags were originally regarded as the mere vehicles of expelled diseases in accordance with the old superstition already described, but there is no doubt that the tree or the tree-spirit is looked upon as the power through which the diseases are driven out. The Mang-tao tree is often adorned with more than mere rags: cloth scrolls on which are inscribed mottoes and sentences expressive of gratitude and reverence are also to be seen on its branches. Grant Allen remarks that "Christianity has not extinguished the veneration for sacred trees in Syria, where they are still prayed to in sickness and hung with rags."<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to find in a remote Weihaiwei village—probably never visited by any European other than an occasional Englishman on official duty—a superstition that still flourishes in the very birthplace of Christianity.

<sup>1</sup> *The Evolution of the Idea of God*, p. 150.



## CHAPTER XVI

### THE DRAGON, MOUNTAIN-WORSHIP, BUDDHISM

A DISTRICT like Weihaiwei, which is agricultural and which also possesses an extensive coast-line, naturally pays special reverence to the gods that preside over the weather and the sea. Two of the most popular of the Weihaiwei deities are Lung Wang—the Dragon-king—who possesses the power of manipulating rain-falls and is therefore appealed to in seasons of drought, and T'ien Hou—the Queen of Heaven, also known as Shêng Mu, the Holy Mother—a goddess who is in many respects the Taoist counterpart of the Buddhist Kuan Yin (the “Goddess of Mercy”) and is regarded as a protecting deity of sailors and fishermen. The Holy Mother has many shrines along the coast, besides a quaint old temple at Port Edward and a locally-famous one called Ai-shan Miao on a mountain-pass a short distance to the north-west of the market-village of Yang-t'ing. The last-named temple, which recently has been undergoing a partial restoration, is, owing to its position, exposed to the fierce north winds of winter and the equally boisterous south winds of early summer, and after its erection about the end of the fifteenth century it was more than once blown down. The priests and other wise men of the time deliberated on the question of how to prevent such catastrophes in future, and finally decided that the best way would be to dig a tunnel through the hill

from north to south *underneath* the temple, so as to give the wind a means of crossing the pass comfortably without hurting the building. The tunnel was duly made and exists to this day. It is over six feet in height, four feet in breadth, and perhaps thirty yards in length. No self-respecting wind, it was supposed, would play havoc with the walls and roof of the temple when a nice channel had been specially constructed for its private use, and indeed for many years, it is said, the temple enjoyed complete immunity from storms. But the priest now in charge has informed me regretfully that the tempests of these latter days are not so amenable to reason and discipline as were those of the good old times.<sup>1</sup>

Temples and shrines to Lung Wang, the Dragon-king, can be seen in or near many villages, sometimes adjoining the shrine of the T'u Ti, and also on many headlands along the coast. The Dragon-king's mother is a favourite object of worship as well as the Dragon-king himself, and her image often occupies a neighbouring shrine. The dragon, as is well known, figures prominently in Chinese myth and legend and in Chinese art-conceptions. It is regarded as a kind of symbol of empire and of things imperial: the "dragon-body" is the emperor's person; the "dragon-seat" is the emperor's throne; the "dragon-pen" is the imperial autograph; the "dragon-flag" is the imperial standard. The myths connected with the dragon are vague and conflicting and no doubt they are of various origins, though Taoism, always an eclectic religion, has found room for them all in its capacious system. There are the dragons of the four quarters of the universe and a fifth for the centre; there are the four

<sup>1</sup> We need not jeer at Chinese simplicity in this matter unless we reserve some of our gibes for the good folk of Settrington, Yorkshire, where "it is considered prudent during a thunder-storm to leave the house door open in order to enable the lightning to get out if it should come in." (*County Folk-lore*, vol. ii.: *North Riding of Yorkshire*, pp. 43-4.)





AI-SHAN PASS AND TEMPLE (see p. 385).





dragons of the seas (*Hai lung wang*), the dragon of rain and clouds, the earth dragon (who is closely concerned with *fêng-shui*<sup>1</sup>), the dragon of hidden treasures, the heavenly dragon, and several protean dragons that can assume any shape and go anywhere they please. The Mother-dragon, judging from her clay image in the temples, seems to be quite an ordinary and rather benevolent old lady, who—one might think—should have been the last person in the world to give birth to an uncanny son; but even the Dragon himself is similarly privileged to be represented by the image of a man.

Serpent-worship, which was one origin of the dragon-mythology,<sup>2</sup> seems to have left several traces of its existence in China: large snakes—especially in localities where snakes are rare—are often supposed to be manifestations of the divine Dragon.<sup>3</sup> There is another superstition to the effect that certain evil demons can assume a serpent-like shape and drive men to death by haunting them and climbing on their backs.<sup>4</sup> Very recently (during the summer of 1909) a large snake was killed by lightning near a village close

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 119 *seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Serpent-worship was as we know common in Egypt, and also among the Hebrews up to the time of Hezekiah, and among certain Indian and other Asiatic races. As for "dragons," they existed even in Lincolnshire and Gloucestershire (see *County Folk-lore*, vol. x. p. 33; and *County Folk-lore: Gloucestershire*, p. 23). It is unnecessary to remind the English reader of St. George and his feats. For further parallels see Dennys's *Folk-lore of China*, pp. 92, 102 *seq.*, 107, 110.

<sup>3</sup> Sir Robert Douglas mentions a case in point in his *Confucianism and Taouism* (5th ed.), p. 277. He says of a certain great serpent that "Li Hung-chang, the viceroy of the province, came in person to pay reverence to it as the personification of the Dragon-king." For a discussion of snake-demons in China see De Groot's *Religious System of China*, vol. v. pp. 626 *seq.* See also *J.R.A.S. (China Branch)*, vol. xxxiv. p. 116. For a famous snake-demon legend that has been widely accepted in lands other than China, the reader need not look further than Genesis, chap. iii.

<sup>4</sup> A belief of the kind exists in Japan. See Griffis, *The Religions of Japan* (4th ed.), p. 32. For China, see also De Groot, *Religious System of China*, vol. iv. pp. 214-19.

to the borders of the Weihaiwei Territory. Next morning (the thunderstorm having occurred at night) the villagers found the scorched body of the reptile and forthwith agreed among themselves that it was a devil-snake. Their only reasons for this surmise seem to have been its unusually great size<sup>1</sup> and the peculiar manner of its death. A devil-snake is supposed to be nearly as dangerous when dead as when alive, so the villagers deputed six of their number to carry it to the coast and carefully consign it to the ocean. There, no doubt, the sea-dragon could look after its own.

"The Chinese, the Mexicans and the Semitic nations," says Dr. Aston, "concur in associating water with the serpent."<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps it was the sinuosity of rivers viewed from a height that first suggested the connection, and this would also account for the Chinese dragon's association with mountains as well as with rivers. It should be remembered that when one meets cases of mountain-gods, river-gods, sea-gods, tree-gods, one finds one of two beliefs, or both inextricably mixed: there is the belief that the mountain, river, sea or tree is itself a god, and there is the belief that these natural objects are merely inhabited or presided over by a god or spirit, who may or may not be visible to mortal eyes. We know that in the case of sun-worship the earliest belief seems to have been that the visible sun is the god himself; later on the sun is regarded merely as the sun's chariot; and later still the god (Apollo) identifies himself with so many different activities and interests that we are apt altogether to forget or ignore his primary connection with the sun. The case of Zeus, who was originally the deified vault of heaven, is a similar one: and there are very many others.

<sup>1</sup> Large snakes are very rare in Shantung, though pythons are common enough in south China.

<sup>2</sup> *Shinto*, p. 42.



The legend current in Weihaiwei regarding the origin of the Dragon-king (who may be compared with the Nāga-rāja of the Indian peninsula) runs somewhat as follows. His mother was an ordinary mortal, but gave birth to him in a manner that was not—to say the least—quite customary. Being in his dragon-shape the lusty infant immediately flew away on a journey of exploration, but returned periodically for the purpose of being fed. As he grew larger and more terrifying in aspect day by day his mother grew much alarmed, and confided her woes to her husband, the dragon's father. The father after due consideration decided there was no help for it but to cut off his preposterous son's head: so next day he waited behind a curtain, sword in hand, for the dragon's arrival. The great creature flew into the house in his usual unceremonious manner, curled his tail round a beam below the roof, and hung head downwards in such a way that by swaying himself gently he could reach his mother's breast. At this juncture his father came from behind the curtain, whirled his sword round his head, and brought it down on what ought to have been the dragon's neck. But whether it was that his hand shook, or he misjudged the distance, or his prey was too quick for him, the fact remains that the dragon's head remained where it was, and its owner merely emitted a strange gurgling sound that might have been meant for an expression of irritation or might on the other hand have been a draconic chuckle. Before the sword could be whirled a second time the dragon seized his father round the waist, untwisted his tail from the beam in the roof, and flew away to the eastern seas. The dragon's father was never seen again, but the dragon and his mother were elevated to a divine rank from which they have never since been displaced.

The reasons for the elevation to godhead are perhaps not quite apparent: but the popular saying that "the

dragon's bounty is as profound as the ocean and the mother-dragon's virtue is as lofty as the hills" has a reference to their functions as controllers of the rains and clouds. Of other local legends about Lung Wang perhaps two will suffice.

In the Jung-ch'êng district, not far from the British frontier,<sup>1</sup> is a pool of water which though several miles from the sea is said to taste of sea-salt, to be fathomless, and to remain always at the same level. It is dedicated to the Dragon. One day an inquisitive villager tried to fathom its gloomy depths with his *pien-tang* or carrying-pole. Hardly had he immersed it in the water than it was grasped by a mysterious force and wrenched out of his hand. It was immediately drawn below, and after waiting in vain for its reappearance the villager went home. A few days later he was on the seacoast, gathering seaweed for roof-thatch, when suddenly he beheld his *pien-tang* floating in the water below the rocks on which he was standing. On the first available opportunity after this, he burned three sticks of incense in Lung Wang's temple as an offering to the deity that had given him so striking a demonstration of his miraculous power. The Lung Wang of the ocean, it may be mentioned, is said to have a great treasure-house under the sea in which he stores the wealth that comes to him from wrecked junks. Among his most precious possessions are the eyes of certain great fish, which are believed to be priceless gems. That is the reason, say the fisher-folk, why large dead fish, when cast up on shore, are always found to be eyeless: Lung Wang has picked out their eyes and put them among his treasures.

The annals of Weihaiwei also contain this story. In the year 1723 there was a very heavy shower of rain. In the sky, among the dark clouds, was espied a dragon. When the storm passed off a man

<sup>1</sup> Near the village of Hsing-lin ("Almond-Grove").



named Chiang of the village of Ho Ch'ing or Huo Ch'ien picked up a Thing that was "as large as a sieve, round as the sun, thick as a coin, and lustrous as the finest jade. It reflected the sun's light and shone like a star, so that it dazzled the eyes." It was passed from hand to hand and minutely examined, but no one knew what it was. The village soothsayer was appealed to for a decision. A single glance at the strange object was enough for the man of wisdom. "This Thing," he said, "is a scale that has fallen from the body of the dragon." Chiang placed the treasure on his family-altar and preserved it as a precious heirloom, but whether it still exists no one seems to know, or those who know will not tell.

Among the greatest of the Taoist gods are Lao Chün,—Lao Tzŭ himself, who would have been more disgusted than most men to know of his future deification; P'an Ku, a kind of magnified Adam; and Yü Huang Shang Ti, the Jade-Imperial-God to whom is entrusted the supreme control of the world and mundane affairs. The functions of these deities are general rather than specific, so it is no wonder that they are rather neglected by the ordinary worshipper, who usually prays to the Taoist gods not for the sake of glorifying the divine personage addressed (which would be regarded as mere useless flattery) but with the direct and avowed object of obtaining some benefit for himself or his friends and relatives.

One hears little of Lao Chün and P'an Ku in Weihaiwei—probably most villagers know hardly anything of them—but there are several shrines dedicated to the Jade-Imperial-God. These are little stone buildings on the hill-tops. They are perhaps the most interesting, if among the most insignificant in size and appearance, of all the Taoist temples. Mountain-worship is one of the very oldest forms of religion in China. The most ancient historical

records which the country possesses tell us how those famous old emperors of the Golden Age—Yao, Shun and Yü—offered sacrifices on mountain-tops. The old records are so terse in expression that it is scarcely possible to say definitely whether the mountains were worshipped for their own sakes or whether they were merely regarded as altars for the worship of Shang Ti or T'ien, the One God or the Greatest of Gods. As the Emperor Shun (2255–05 B.C.) and other rulers of that early time (presuming they are not altogether mythical) are said to have selected particular mountains for their acts of worship it seems probable that the mountains themselves, or the spirits they harboured, were the usual objects of worship; though it is possible and even probable that the imperial sacrifices to Shang Ti (still carried out annually on the Altar of Heaven at Peking) were also regularly offered up on the summits of lofty hills.

Primitive worshippers of the visible heavens naturally thought that the higher they climbed the nearer they would be to their god and the more acceptable to him would be their sacrifices. As time went on, four and subsequently five mountains in China were singled out as being specially sacred for their own sakes as well as for the imperial sacrifices, and those Five Mountains (*Wu Yüeh*) have been annually visited and worshipped by countless pilgrims through all the centuries down to the present day.<sup>1</sup> It does not appear, from the ancient records of the *Shu Ching*, that

<sup>1</sup> The Five Sacred Mountains are T'ai Shan in Shantung, Hêng Shan in Shansi (and a rival claimant of the same name in Chihli), Sung Shan in Honan, Hua Shan in Shensi, and the Nan Yüeh in Hunan. The Spirits of these Mountains are known as Ta Ti—"Great Gods." The most famous of them, so far as literature and tradition go, is T'ai Shan; the most popular (judging from my own observation of the number of worshippers during the pilgrim season) is the Nan Yüeh; the most beautiful, as well as the loftiest, is Hua Shan, which—when there is a railway from Honan-fu to Hsi-an-fu—will become a European tourists' Mecca. See *supra*, pp. 71, 73, 74.



Taoism had anything whatever to do with mountain-worship in its early days: but it was evidently the policy of the Taoists—as soon as they developed something like a priestcraft—to associate themselves and their cult with every form of worship in the country. Thus they soon established a priestly guardianship, which they still retain, over the Five Sacred Mountains. I have come across, in Chinese Buddhistic literature, evidence that the priests of these mountains were Taoist priests in the first century of the Christian era. No doubt it was natural enough that the sacred hills should fall under the priestly superintendence of the Taoists, for it was in the dark ravines and caves and on the rocky ledges of great mountains that the Taoist recluses were accustomed to make their solitary homes.

The impelling cause that first drove them to the hills was no doubt to find the magical herbs and roots that were necessary ingredients of the elixir of life, and to practise the self-control and purity of thought that were as essential to success as the mysterious draught itself. But the spell of the mountains soon became independent of drugs and philosophies. Men discovered—many centuries before the sterner aspects of hill and forest had begun to make their appeal to the poets and artists of Europe—that wild Nature was an enchantress who made willing slaves of all who had feelings responsive to beautiful sights and sounds. The time came when poets, scholars, dreamers—many of them Taoists only in name and some not even in name—sought the solitude of mountains not because they hoped to concoct medicines or acquire strange faculties and powers, but because they had fallen under the power of the great enchantress, because they found amid the sky-piercing crags and cloistered watercourses and dark pine-forests of the great mountains a companionship, a peace of mind, a pure and sometimes ecstatic happiness that they had never known and could never know in peopled plains or in

crowded cities. If one may presume to alter a single word of a great poet's confession—

“The sounding cataract  
 Haunted them like a passion: the tall rock,  
 The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,  
 Their colours and their forms, were then to them  
 An appetite.”

Five mountains, it is hardly necessary to say, were too few to satisfy the Chinese longing for natural beauty. When the Buddhists came to China in the first century of our era they found Taoist recluses and priests in possession of the Five Sacred Mountains, but it was not long before they, too, fixed upon equally beautiful mountain-retreats of their own;<sup>1</sup> and no one who has visited a number of them can fail to be struck by the peculiarly keen sense of the loveliness of nature that must have guided the Buddhist recluses in their choice of romantic sites for hermitages and monasteries. It is hardly too much to say that there is not a beautiful mountain in all China that is not to-day or has not been in past time the resort of monks and hermits or laymen who have abandoned “the world.”

People to whom wild Nature does not appeal with

<sup>1</sup> The so-called Four Famous Mountains (*Ssü Ta Ming Shan*) of Buddhism are Wu-t'ai Shan in Shansi, Omei Shan in Ssüch'uan, Chiu Hua Shan in Anhui and Pootoo Shan off the coast of Chehkiang. After visits to all these hills I am inclined to give the palm of beauty to Omei Shan, though the others have great charms of their own, more especially the little fairyland of Pootoo, with its silver sands, its picturesque monasteries, its tree-clad slopes and the isle-studded deep-blue sea that laps its rock-fringed coast. But apart from the Five Sacred Mountains (still predominantly Taoist) and the Four Famous Hills (almost exclusively Buddhist) there are very many other beautiful and famous temple-studded hills in China. Wu-tang in Hupei, T'ai Pai in Shensi, T'ien-t'ai in Chehkiang, Huang Shan in Anhui, Shang-Fang near Peking, Wu-i and Ku Shan in Fuhkien, the Lo-fou hills near Canton, are only a few of those of which the fame has spread furthest.



irresistible force, those whom she does not "haunt like a passion," are of course in the overwhelming majority in China as everywhere else, and it is just as well, perhaps, for the practical concerns of this workaday world that such is the case. Yet let not the hermits and Nature-worshippers be despised: for it is an intense imaginative love of natural beauty that has inspired the noblest pictorial art of China and has proved the well-spring of her greatest poetry, and it was amid the glory and wonder of the eternal hills that some of her greatest philosophers have pondered the problems of life and death.

The hills of Weihaiwei, in spite of some fine scenery, are of small account when compared with the glorious mountains of southern and far western China, but even Weihaiwei has its legends of saints and monks and "immortals" who made their homes amid the rocks and woods. There are no monasteries now in this district, but the ravines still contain both Taoist and Buddhist temples, each with its priest or two, and it is easy to see that the Buddhists have generally secured the most charming sites. The bitter coldness of the winter is sufficient excuse for the absence of residential temples on the hill-tops: though, as we have seen, there are many little stone-shrines dedicated to the Jade-Imperial-God, the Governor of the Taoist universe. This is the deity that has practically taken the place (so far as Taoism is concerned) of the exalted God of Heaven—T'ien or Shang Ti<sup>1</sup>—who was worshipped four or five thousand years ago by the rulers of the Chinese people. There are similar little Buddhist shrines on the hills, but these are comparatively few. Among the greater hills of the Territory there are several known locally as Yü

<sup>1</sup> *Shang Ti* is the term that the majority of Protestant missionaries in China have adopted to represent the word God. *T'ien Chu* (Lord of Heaven) is the name selected by the Roman Catholics. The Chinese know Protestantism as *Ye-su Chiao* (the Jesus Doctrine) and Roman Catholicism as *T'ien Chu Chiao* (the Lord-of-Heaven Doctrine).

Huang Ting (the Peak of the Jade-God) and at least two known as Fo Erh Ting (the Peak of Buddha). Every hill also has its shrine—sometimes a mere heap of unhewn stones put together without mortar—dedicated to the Shan Shên or Spirit of the Hill, a divinity who belongs to the same order of beings as the Ta Ti or Great Gods of the Five Sacred Mountains. The hill-gods of Weihaiwei, though they are not visited by pilgrim-bands from afar, receive a limited amount of “worship” from herdsmen, silkworm-breeders and others. On many hill-slopes may also be seen shrines to the Niu Wang and the Ma Wang, divinities whose business it is to protect cattle and horses, and to Ch’ung Wang, the “king of locusts.” Locusts, as we know, have at various times been a terrible scourge to the local farmers. It is supposed that by propitiating their king with prayers and offerings they can be banished to some locality where prayers and offerings are neglected. The Chinese of Weihaiwei say that in spite of the devastation that locusts can work among crops they are not really so much to be dreaded as many other insects who *have no king* and are therefore under no one’s control and subject to no law. If monarchical government, it is thought, could be established among the more harmful flies and grubs, the happiness of labouring mankind would be materially augmented. The shrines to the mountain-spirit and the deities that preside over horses, cattle and locusts very often contain no images but merely small uncarved stones. The images of Yü Huang and other deities, when they exist, are usually squat, flat-faced, dwarf-like creatures with large heads and small bodies.<sup>1</sup> Of all these numerous mountain shrines the

<sup>1</sup> The simple uncarved stones seem to gain in interest when we go back in thought to the days of the early Greeks and the early Babylonians and Assyrians. Of the ancient Greeks Pausanias tells us that they worshipped the gods through the medium of images, and that these images were unwrought stones. Some of the T’u Ti and other images that one finds everywhere in Weihaiwei—with their short, squat, scarcely human bodies—suggest a transition from the mere un-





SHRINES TO THE MOUNTAIN-SPIRIT AND LUNG WANG  
(see p. 396).

p. 396]



*Photo by Ah Fong.*

WORSHIP AT THE ANCESTRAL TOMBS (see p. 187).







largest are only about eight feet high and six feet square, while the smallest are mere dolls' houses.

The highest hill in the Territory is the central peak of the Macdonald Range, in the South District. The Chinese name of the hill is Chêng-ch'i or Cho-ch'i Shan. Here there are half a dozen or more shrines to the various deities mentioned, each containing small stone images and stone incense-burners. Just below the summit is an old stone slab with an almost illegible inscription relating to "Heaven and Earth," and close by is a shrine to the Mother-dragon. The images are all weather-worn and have an appearance of antiquity which is perhaps deceptive, though they are probably much older than their stone canopies, which—as is stated on several mural tablets—have been restored at various times during the present dynastic period, beginning in 1644. Besides the shrines there is also a small bell-house containing an iron bell dated Hsien Fêng X (1860), and close by are the unrecognisable remains of a theatrical stage where performances were at one time given in the middle of the seventh month. The principal shrine is the *San Shêng Miao*, "The Temple of the Three Holy Ones" of Taoism.

wrought stone to the carved and finished statue. Similarly in Greece we find first the absolutely rough, unhewn stone, such as that which represented Eros at Thespiæ, next the legless, angular, ugly images such as the well-known square Hermes—of which, one would have thought, both gods and men should be ashamed—and finally the exquisite statues of idealised boyhood and youth such as are still a source of the purest delight to all lovers of beauty and of art. Unfortunately the desire to make the gods appear different from ordinary mankind led the Chinese, as it led the Indian and other Eastern races, to what may be called the cultivation of the grotesque, so that there is very little that is grand or beautiful, as a rule, even in the best of their divine images. The finest statues, generally speaking, are undoubtedly those of Sakya Buddha. Tradition, in this respect, has been comparatively merciful to the memory of the great Indian philosopher and sage. Europeans often find fault with the Buddha-faces for their alleged insipidity: whereas what the artist has really aimed at is an ideal of passionless repose.

From this mountain can be seen practically the whole of the leased territory of Weihaiwei, laid out as it were like a map or—as the Chinese would say—like a chessboard. The summit is a ridge which slopes southward and northward to the two beautiful valleys of Yü-chia-k'uang and Chang-chia-shan. Once or twice a year a priest ascends the mountain from a temple far down on the western slope, and having reached the summit he burns a few sticks of incense and recites some Taoist prayers. Occasionally a villager climbs the mountain to return thanks to the Jade-Imperial-God or the spirit of the mountain for granting him success in some family matter or in business: but ordinarily the little group of gods on the hill-top are left in quietness and solitude. The Taoist devotee is not disturbed by uneasy feelings that he is neglecting his deities: loneliness and peace amid beautiful hills and valleys are or ought to be his own ideal, and the gods whom he has made in his own image can surely ask for nothing better.

Of Buddhism in Weihaiwei not a great deal need be said. Some of the beliefs and superstitions which have been dealt with in this book belong, indeed, as much to Buddhism as to Taoism, but the Buddhism is of a kind that would not be recognised in south-eastern Asia. There are some so-called Buddhist temples, each tenanted by a single priest and a pupil or two, and proofs are not wanting that many centuries ago the sites of some of these rather dilapidated buildings were occupied by flourishing little monasteries: but Buddhism has long been a decadent religion in Shantung, and, considering the corrupt state into which it has fallen in northern China, its disappearance as a power in the land is not to be regretted. Judging from the inscriptions on a few old stone tablets it appears that Buddhism in the Weihaiwei district reached its most flourishing state during the T'ang period (618-905 A.D.). At that time, indeed, Buddhist activity throughout China was



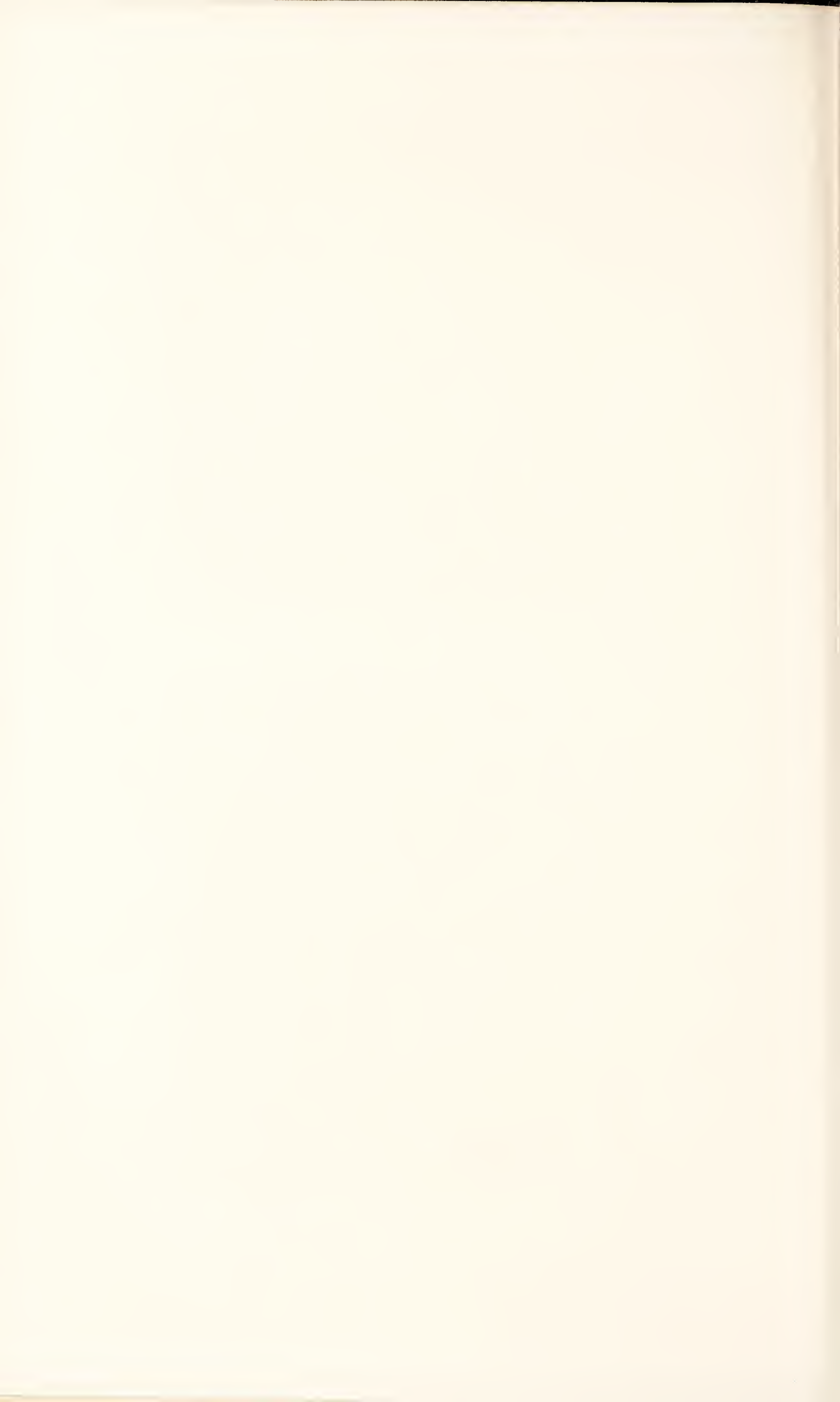


AT THE VILLAGE OF YÜ-CHIA-K'UANG (see p. 398).

p. 398]



A MOUNTAIN STREAM AND HAMLET (see p. 395).





very great, for though the faith often underwent persecution or was treated with chilling neglect, it enjoyed from time to time the goodwill and patronage of the highest and most influential persons in the land.

It was during this period that many famous pilgrims travelled from China to India—the Holy Land of Buddhism—in search of books and relics, and some of them left accounts of their travels which are among the treasures of Chinese literature. This was, indeed, one of the most glorious epochs in Chinese history. It was a period during which the Empire, under a succession of several able and highly-cultured rulers, enjoyed a prosperity—political, social, literary, artistic—that it has never quite attained in any succeeding age. The prosperity seems as a rule to have affected every class of the people and every corner of the Empire: even the comparatively poor and bleak regions of eastern Shantung shared in the good fortune that radiated from the brilliant capital of an Empire which—though the fact was undreamed of by the young nations of Europe—was undoubtedly the mightiest and most highly civilised state then existing in the world.

The existence of large Buddhist monasteries generally indicates a fertile and populous tract of country, for a large assemblage of monks accustomed to live to a great extent on the free offerings of the people can hardly expect to be received with open arms in a region that is inhabited by a sparse and poor population. The monasteries of Weihaiwei, then, were always small—none probably harbouring more than six to twelve monks. But, like Buddhists elsewhere, the monks who came to this part of the Empire took care to select for their dwelling-places the most charming and picturesque sites available. The best or one of the best of these little establishments was known as Ku Shan Ssü—the Monastery of the Ku Hill. It was founded between the years 785 and 804, and part of it still exists as a small temple pleasantly

situated at the foot of the hill from which it takes its name. Close by is the famous Buddha-tree of which mention has been made.<sup>1</sup> Not far away from the temple, and immediately in front of the British District Officer's official quarters, there is a natural hot spring that bubbles out of the sandy bed of a shallow stream. One can imagine how, eleven hundred years ago, the little band of gowned monks, released for an hour from the contemplation of Nirvana or the service of the Lord Buddha, would wend their way in the twilight hour down to the edge of the ravine to lave their reverend limbs in those delicious waters. The spring is still a daily source of joy to hundreds of men and boys from the neighbouring villages, but the monks are all gone.

In the temple there is a large image of the Buddha which, say the villagers, was not made but "just grewed." There is a little story told of this image. A peasant-woman was in the habit of cutting fire-wood from the shrubs on the slopes of Ku Shan and one day she noticed a particularly thick and well-grown shrub which she immediately proceeded to cut down, leaving nothing in the ground but the roots. Next day she happened to pass that way again, and to her amazement found another shrub, equally thick and well grown, in precisely the same spot. Her surprise was great, but seeing no reason why she should neglect to avail herself of her good luck she treated the second shrub exactly as she had treated the first, and took it home. On the third day the same thing happened again. The woman possessed herself of the shrub as before, but having done so she could no longer keep the knowledge of these strange occurrences to herself and decided to let her neighbours into the secret.

Next day a large number of her incredulous fellow-villagers accompanied her to the spot she indicated, and there, sure enough, a lordly shrub had once more

<sup>1</sup> See p. 381.





WÊN-CH'ÜAN-T'ANG.





made its miraculous appearance. The wise man of the party explained that the locality was obviously haunted by a powerful spirit, and suggested the advisability of digging up the ground to see what might be underneath. This was accordingly done, and immediately below the roots of the shrub was discovered a colossal stone image of Sakyamuni Buddha. The village councillors then held a meeting to discuss the prodigy, and it was unanimously resolved, firstly, that the image had not been carved by the hands of man, and, secondly, that a suitable resting-place must be found for it as soon as possible in a well-conducted Buddhist temple. The temple finally decided on was the Huang K'o Ssü—a lonely building which still exists on a hillside overlooking the village of Fang Chi. Ropes and trestles were obtained, and dozens of willing hands volunteered to carry the sacred image to the temple selected: but the image would not move. A reinforcement of bearers was summoned, yet though they pulled and strained for over an hour not a single inch of progress was made. The wise man then announced that the Buddha had evidently taken a dislike to the Huang K'o Ssü: perhaps he wished to be taken to the Ku Shan temple instead. So the bearers began pulling in the opposite direction (for Huang K'o Ssü lies to the south, Ku Shan Ssü to the north), and to their astonishment hardly any effort on their part was required: the image almost went of its own accord. In a short space of time the party reached a brook which happened to have been swollen by heavy rains. Fearing that an accident might occur if an attempt were made to cross the brook at that time, the villagers decided to leave it on the bank until the flood-waters had gone down. At sunrise next day they all returned to the spot where the image had been left, but to their profound consternation it had disappeared. After a prolonged search it was accidentally discovered on the *further* side of the brook: obviously it had gone

across of its own accord! By this time the villagers were thoroughly awed, and even the most irreligious of them impressively assured his companions that he had decided to devote the rest of his life to piety and good works. The wonderful image was duly installed in the temple of its choice, and there—amid picturesque if somewhat decayed surroundings—it still remains.

One of the largest Buddhist temples is that known as Tou Shan Ssü, situated on a hill overlooking the village of Tung Tou Shan. It contains nothing of much interest except a "temple of horrors," as Europeans usually designate such places, namely a roomful of clay images representing the tortures applied to sinners in the Buddhist "hells." The educated classes of China (including enlightened Buddhists) regard such things with good-natured contempt. A writer in the *Jung-ch'êng Chih*, mentioning the so-called hells of Buddhism, remarks that "although this is not in accordance with the true worship of the gods it is useful as a means of warning and keeping in order the ignorant multitude."<sup>1</sup> Into the outside wall of this temple has been built a curious old stone representing the historical Buddha. The style of carving is Indian, such as may be seen in many old Buddhist temples in China. The traditional Indian styles of what may be called ecclesiastical architecture and decoration survived in Chinese Buddhistic art long after Indian and Chinese Buddhists had ceased to make pilgrimages to each other's countries. This stone was doubtless saved for the present buildings during one of the rather frequent restorations which this temple has undergone.

There is now very little that is distinctively Buddhistic in the religious ideas or ceremonies of the people, and apart from the priests it is very doubtful whether there is a single Chinese in the Territory

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the remark of Diodorus Siculus (i. 2): "The myths that are told of affairs in Hades, though pure invention at bottom, contribute to make men pious and upright."



who could give the date and place of the Buddha's birth,<sup>1</sup> much less give any account of the teachings of that wonderful man. The reincarnation of human souls is vaguely believed in after a fashion, though some belief of the kind would probably be found in China even though Buddhism had never existed. The theory of the "transmigration of souls," which is not Buddhistic except in a popular sense, has driven out of sight and memory the theory of the reincarnation of Karma, which is taught by canonical Buddhism. The doctrine of the Buddha on this and many other points is too profound to be grasped by the uncultivated peasant. The crude idea of "transmigration" has been held by numerous tribes and races never reached or affected by Buddhism—such as certain American Indians, Greenlanders, Australian aborigines, and African negroes: indeed it existed in Asia (and probably elsewhere) long before the days of the Buddha.

Dr. Tylor shows,<sup>2</sup> in the case of the Manichæans and Nestorians, that even within the range of Christian influence the idea of transmigration has widely flourished; indeed, to a limited extent it apparently exists to this day among certain Christians of eastern Europe. Thus when a Chinese litigant in Weihaiwei presents a petition in which he says, "if I am not telling the strict truth may I after death change into a donkey or a worm and never more appear in the form of a man," he is only expressing himself in the terms of a belief that is in reality independent of Buddhism, though now closely connected with it in the popular mind. I have before me a petition which concludes in words that may be translated thus: "If His Worship will take pity on his humble petitioner and come to his help in the present trouble, then the whole of his petitioner's family and all future generations of his

<sup>1</sup> In any case they would be wrong, as the Chinese Buddhists ante-date the Buddha's birth by several centuries.

<sup>2</sup> *Primitive Culture* (4th ed.), vol. ii. pp. 2 *seq.* and 14 *seq.*

family for a period of ten thousand *kalpas* (innumerable ages) will reverently raise their hands and repeat the name of Amitabha Buddha." This, of course, is a "patter" taken from the lips of the Buddhist priests; Amitabha<sup>1</sup> is the great Buddha-god of the fabled Western Heaven—that abode of bliss which in the Chinese Mahayana system has practically abolished (except for certain monkish schools) the Nirvana of primitive and orthodox Buddhism.

A few stories and legends survive in Weihaiwei to show that Buddhism was once a mightier power in this part of China than it is at present. Of a fisherman named Miao we are told that once upon a time when he was at sea he hooked what he thought was a great fish; but when he hauled in his line he found his "catch" was an image of Buddha. Being an irreligious man he took a stone and smashed the image to pieces. A few days afterwards he sickened and died. According to another story an image of Kuan Yin (the "Goddess of Mercy") in the tower of the south gate of Weihai city is of peculiar sanctity. About the year 1650 part of the city wall collapsed and the gate-tower fell in ruins: but the image, though it was only made of clay, was miraculously preserved and was found uninjured on the top of the pile of ruins. The people of Weihaiwei marvelled much at this incident and willingly subscribed for the restoration of the tower and the shrine. For the better protection of the goddess in future, an image of Wei To was set up within the shrine, and since then there have been no accidents.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Japanese Amida.

<sup>2</sup> Wei To in Chinese Buddhism is a fabulous Bodhisatva whose special function it is to act as protector of Buddhist temples (*Vihāra-pāla*) and all their contents. His image is generally found in the front hall of such temples. He is often depicted on the last page of Buddhist books: this prevents them from destruction by fire and insects, and (it is confidently asserted) compels their borrower to return them to their owner. A private Wei To would perhaps be a most welcome addition to the furniture of many an Englishman's library.



A more interesting story is told of Miss Ch'ên, who was a Buddhist nun celebrated for her virtue and austerity. Between the years 1628 and 1643 she left her nunnery near Weihai city and set out on a long journey for the purpose of collecting subscriptions for casting a new image of the Buddha. She wandered through Shantung and Chihli and finally reached Peking, and there—subscription book in hand—she stationed herself at the Ch'ien Mên (Great South Gate) in order to take toll from those who wished to lay up for themselves treasures in the Western Heaven. The first passer-by who took any notice of her was an amiable maniac. His dress was made of coloured shreds and patches and his general appearance was wild and uncouth. "Whither away, nun?" he asked. Miss Ch'ên explained that she was collecting subscriptions for the casting of a great image of Buddha and had come all the way from Shantung. "Throughout my life," remarked the madman, "I was ever a generous giver"; so taking the nun's subscription book he headed a page with his own name (in very large characters) and the amount subscribed. The amount in question was two "cash," equivalent to a small fraction of a farthing. He then handed over the two small coins and went on his way.

In course of time the nun returned to Weihaiwei with her subscriptions, and the work of casting the image was duly begun. When the time had come for the process of smelting, it was observed that the copper remained hard and intractable. Again and again the furnace was fed with fuel, but the shapeless mass of metal remained firm as a rock. The head workman, who was a man of wide experience, volunteered an explanation of the matter. "An offering of great value must be missing," he said. "Let the collection-book be examined so that it may be seen whose subscription has been withheld." The nun, who was standing by, immediately produced the mad-

man's money, which on account of its minute value she had not taken the trouble to hand over. "There is one cash," she said, "and there is another. Certainly the offering of these must have been an act of the highest merit, and the giver must be a holy man who will some day attain Buddhahood."

As she said this she threw the two cash into the midst of the cauldron. The great bubbles rose and burst, the metal melted and ran like the sap from a tree, limpid as flowing water, and in a few moments the work was accomplished and the new Buddha successfully cast. This story has a pleasant and instructive little moral of its own, though perhaps the Western reader will be chiefly struck by the parallel between the madman's two cash and the Widow's two mites.<sup>1</sup> In each case the value of the gift lay not in the amount given but in the spirit of the giver.

A glance at the interior of a Buddhist temple at Weihaiwei shows that there is little or nothing left here of any form of Buddhism that is worthy of the name. A native from Burma, Siam and Ceylon (where comparatively pure forms of Buddhism are still to be found) would recognise the image of Sakyamuni, but otherwise he would see hardly anything to indicate that the Light of Asia had ever penetrated to this far corner of the continent. The people, as we have seen, know nothing of the life of the Buddha and next to nothing of his teachings, while the priests—temple caretakers would be a more fitting description for them—know not much more than the people. Here, as in the greater part of China, efforts have evidently been made to popularise the Buddhist temples by the introduction of the images of Taoist divinities—especially the various gods that bring material prosperity and heal diseases. A Buddhist temple therefore contains nearly as many images as a Taoist

<sup>1</sup> Mark xii. 41-4, and Luke xxi. 1-4. Buddhism also has a story of a Widow who gave as an offering two pieces of copper. It occurs in a Chinese version of the Buddhacarita of Asvagosha.



temple: if they were excluded the temple would be deserted, and the sole revenue—apart from the profits arising from a few cultivated fields—would probably be a small sum paid annually by laymen for the privilege of storing their unused coffins in the temple precincts.

Weihaiwei is not by any means unique in respect of the decayed state of Buddhism. It is hardly too much to say that Buddhism as a distinct religion only exists in China in certain famous monastic centres. The only true Buddhists are the monks of the great monasteries (to be found chiefly south of the Yangtse) and the people of certain localities where monastic influences happen to be strong. Elsewhere Buddhism has indeed tinged—sometimes very deeply—the religious life and customs of the people, especially in the beliefs and ceremonies relating to death and burial, but it can hardly be said to be a separate living faith.

Of other religions besides the *San Chiao*—the “Three Doctrines” of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism—there is very little to be said so far as Weihaiwei is concerned. Mohammedanism exists in certain parts of the province—as in Chinan-fu and Ch’ing-chou-fu—but there is no trace of it in Weihaiwei or its neighbourhood. Both Catholic and Protestant Missions exist, and there are some converts to Christianity. At present—1910—there are reported to be about fifty baptized Catholics besides some catechumens preparing for baptism; there are also eighty-three Christians belonging to Protestant denominations. The Christians may thus be said to number less than one-tenth of one per cent. of the inhabitants of the Territory.

## CHAPTER XVII

### RELIGION AND SUPERSTITION IN EAST AND WEST

WE have now made a rough survey of the different religious systems that are to be found in China, and especially in that part of China with which these pages are chiefly concerned; and it is not improbable that the reader's verdict will be that Confucianism is an admirable if unemotional system of ethics, that Buddhism has decayed out of recognition, and that Taoism has degenerated into mere ritual, mythology and image-worship. But before we reproach the Chinese for the childish superstitions that seem to occupy so large a place in their outlook on life, let us remember that the Chinese are very far from believing all they are supposed to believe.

When writers on comparative mythology and religion declare that this or that race holds this or that strange belief they do not necessarily mean that such belief is present to the minds of the people in question in the definite and clear-cut fashion that a dogma of the Christian faith may be supposed to present itself to a devout Catholic. A so-called belief, when it comes to be closely examined, is often found to be nothing more than some quaint old fancy that has crystallised itself in the form of a quasi-religious ceremonial. Many a strange national or tribal custom that seems to presuppose a definite religious belief is carried on because it is traditional; the belief that



it represents may or may not be extinct: in some cases, indeed, it has obviously been invented to explain the existence of a ceremony the cause of which has long been forgotten. Sometimes the custom lingers on—like the children's masquerades in the first Chinese month at Weihaiwei<sup>1</sup>—not only after the ideas that originally prompted it have disappeared but in spite of the fact that no one has thought it worth while to evolve a new theory of origin.

If it were definitely proved that these children's dances sprang from prehistoric magical rites connected with the growth of the crops, we might soon hear from European writers on myth and religion that "the people of Weihaiwei hold certain dances in the first month of each year in the belief that they will conduce to good harvests." Yet this would be a misleading statement, for whatever the origin of the custom may have been the people of Weihaiwei at the present time are absolutely destitute of any such belief. When studying comparative religion in books it is very necessary to be on one's guard against obtaining quite erroneous impressions of the actual conditions of belief among the people treated of, for however careful and conscientious the writers may be, it is very difficult for them (writing very largely from travellers' and missionaries' notes) to distinguish between a belief that is an active religious force and a stereotyped custom which merely represents a belief that existed or is supposed to have existed in days gone by. The mistakes that arise are of course the natural result of studying books about men instead of studying the men themselves. Unfortunately all of us are obliged to rely on books to a great extent, as life is too short to enable each of us to make himself personally familiar with the customs and religious ideas of more than a very small number of different races. But this

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 183-4.

fact ought to make us particularly careful not to run the risk of misleading others by misunderstanding and therefore erroneously reporting the facts that have come under our own observation.

There are few of the minor superstitious practices of the Chinese which are regarded by their Western teachers as more ridiculous and contemptible than their strange fancy that they can send money, articles of furniture and clothing and written messages to the dead by the simple and economical expedient of burning paper images or representations of such things. Perhaps at a Chinese funeral one may be shocked to see a liberal-minded Chinese gentleman of one's own acquaintance joining the rest of the mourners in this foolish occupation. If, after having gained his confidence, one asks him whether he literally believes that paper money will turn into real money in the other world or that his dead ancestors actually require a supply of money to help them to keep up appearances among their brother ghosts, he will in all likelihood say that of course he believes in nothing of the kind, but that the paper-burning forms part of the customary rites and it is not for him to alter them. Perhaps he will say that the women and children believe, and that an attempt to disabuse them of their silly notions might unsettle their minds and cause trouble.

If he is a scholar he will perhaps say something like this: "In ancient times real valuables were thrown into the grave. Money, jewels, animals, even living men and women were once buried with the dead. When it was decided that this custom must be given up it was thought necessary to keep ignorant minds quiet by explaining that worthless imitations of the real articles would serve the purpose equally well; so clay and wood and paper began to be used at funerals, and their use still continues. It is a foolish custom, but we think it helps to convey a useful lesson to the average unthinking man and woman



and makes them feel that they are bound to their dead ancestors by ties of love and reverence and gratitude. The more strongly their feelings are moved in this way the more likely will they be to rule their families well and to lead peaceful and orderly and industrious lives. They might show love and reverence for the dead in some better way than by burning heaps of paper? I grant you: but it happens to be our way, and when we ourselves or rather the superstitious masses begin to disbelieve in it and laugh at it then it will be time enough to make a change."

But why should we take the Chinese to task for a custom which we tolerate within a stone's throw of the Vatican itself? How puzzled our Chinese gentleman would be, after listening to our arguments on the folly of burning paper for the dead, to read such a paragraph as this: "In the Church of the Jesuit College at Rome lies buried St. Aloysius Gonzaga, on whose festival it is customary especially for the college students to write letters to him, which are placed on his gaily decorated and illuminated altar, and afterwards burned unopened. The miraculous answering of these letters is vouched for in an English book of 1870."<sup>1</sup>

It is well to remember that as regards the world beyond the grave and the nature of spirits the Chinese ideas—like those of the average European—are vague and inconsistent. The ordinary Christian seems able to reconcile in his own mind (perhaps by providing himself with separate thought-tight compartments) all kinds of heterogeneous beliefs and notions about heaven and hell and the Day of Judgment and the present lot of those who have "gone before." A Chinese who, knowing nothing of Western religious notions, began with an unbiassed mind to study many of our Church hymns, our old-fashioned epitaphs and obituary notices, our funeral sermons and a good deal of our serious poetry (such as Tennyson's magnificent

<sup>1</sup> Tylor's *Primitive Culture* (4th ed.), vol. ii. p. 122.

“Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington”) would probably account for obvious inconsistencies of doctrine by the supposition that the eschatological ideas of the West were rather like those of his own land, inasmuch as each dead man evidently possessed at least three souls—one that remained in the grave, another that hovered round the bereaved relatives, and a third that wore a crown in heaven. Yet the devout church-goer would doubtless be surprised to hear that his prayers and hymns contained any words which could give an outsider so false an impression of his real belief.

I have been asked this question: How is it that from all accounts the Chinese are such sensible and intelligent men and yet hold such puerile and idiotic views about nature and religion? The answer is that backwardness in scientific knowledge (especially in such knowledge as has been acquired very recently even by Western peoples) is accountable for many of their foolish imaginings, but that a very great number of the most childish superstitions and customs of the Chinese are not founded on any existing beliefs at all but are merely traditional forms. The “heathen” rites so harrowingly described by missionaries are very often much more harmless than one would suppose from their accounts. A careless Chinese traveller in England might after observing some of our English rites and customs tell tales which would make England appear hardly less grotesque than poor China appears in numberless books written by well-intentioned foreigners. If he visited an old-fashioned country-house in England and watched the yule-log blazing in the hall at Christmas time he might suppose (after learning the origin of the custom) that his host was knowingly practising an old heathen rite connected with the winter solstice.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For other examples of the “extraordinary survival of pagan fancies amidst Christian worship” see Gomme’s *Folk-lore Relics of Early Village Life*, pp. 138–44; and the works of Tylor, Frazer and other anthropologists *passim*.



At dawn on May Morning it is the custom for the surpliced choristers of Magdalen College to ascend the Great Tower and there greet the rising sun with the sweet strains of a Latin hymn. Just as the full circle of the sun flushes with morning light the grey stone pinnacles the beautiful hymn comes to an end, and the tower—the “dawn-smitten Memnon of a happier hour”—trembles and sways as its eight mighty bells leap into glad music and awaken “the college of the lily” into joyous life. No one seems to know the certain origin of the ancient rite of which this is a survival, but some have said that it represents an old heathen ceremony connected with the worship of the sun. The rite (in a modern form) is very properly kept up because it is singularly beautiful—the most beautiful and impressive ceremony of its kind practised throughout the length and breadth of England. But would not Oxford be politely surprised and somewhat amused if our Chinese traveller were to inform his fellow-countrymen that sun-worship was still kept up at England’s academic capital and that the President of Magdalen was an Egyptian initiate or a Druid?

The analogy between Chinese and English survivals is far from perfect. Heathen ceremonies in England have been Christianised; in China all ceremonies remain “heathen.” But, after all, the difference ceases to oppress us by its magnitude if we regard Religion as One though creeds are many. What good do we do the cause of truth by heaping disagreeable epithets on faiths other than our own? Socrates was denounced as an atheist by his fellow-countrymen. Which of us now would not be proud to have been an atheist with Socrates? Christians themselves were at one time stigmatised as atheists by both Greeks and Romans. What good does the Vatican do to the cause of Christ by vituperating the Modernists because they are honest? What did Athanasius gain, either for himself or for “Orthodoxy,” by applying to the Arians such ugly names as “devils, antichrists, maniacs

leeches, beetles, gnats, chameleons, hydras " and other terms equally discourteous ?<sup>1</sup>

But, comes the reply, when we say the Chinese are idolaters we are only stating a simple fact that any one can verify for himself. "That the Chinese have profound faith in their idols," says a Western writer, "is a fact that cannot for a moment be questioned. China is a nation of idolaters, and neither learning nor intelligence nor high birth tends to quench the belief that has come down from the past that these wooden gods have a power of interfering in human life, and of being able to bestow blessings or to send down curses upon men."<sup>2</sup>

Now this question of idolatry is a difficult one to deal with, for plain speaking is sure to offend. It is on the heads of the unfortunate Chinese "idols" that the vials of Christian wrath are chiefly poured. As a matter of fact it is rather questionable whether the images in Chinese temples are correctly described as idols at all. Surely it would be less misleading to reserve that term for images which are regarded as gods *per se* and not merely as clay or wooden representations of gods. One sees a Chinese "worshipping" an image, say, of Kuan Yin. Does he regard Kuan Yin as actually present before him or does he merely regard the image as a man-made statue of his goddess,—an image set up as an aid to prayer or as a stimulator of the imagination or the emotions?

Theoretically, at least, he most emphatically does not believe that the goddess is herself before him: for he knows perfectly well that if he walks two miles to another temple he will find another image of the same divinity; and that if he wishes to do so he may come across three or four Kuan Yins in the course of a single day's walk. On the island of Pootoo he could see dozens in a couple of hours. Unless the

<sup>1</sup> See Max Müller's *Lectures on the Origin of Religion* (1901 ed.), p. 312.

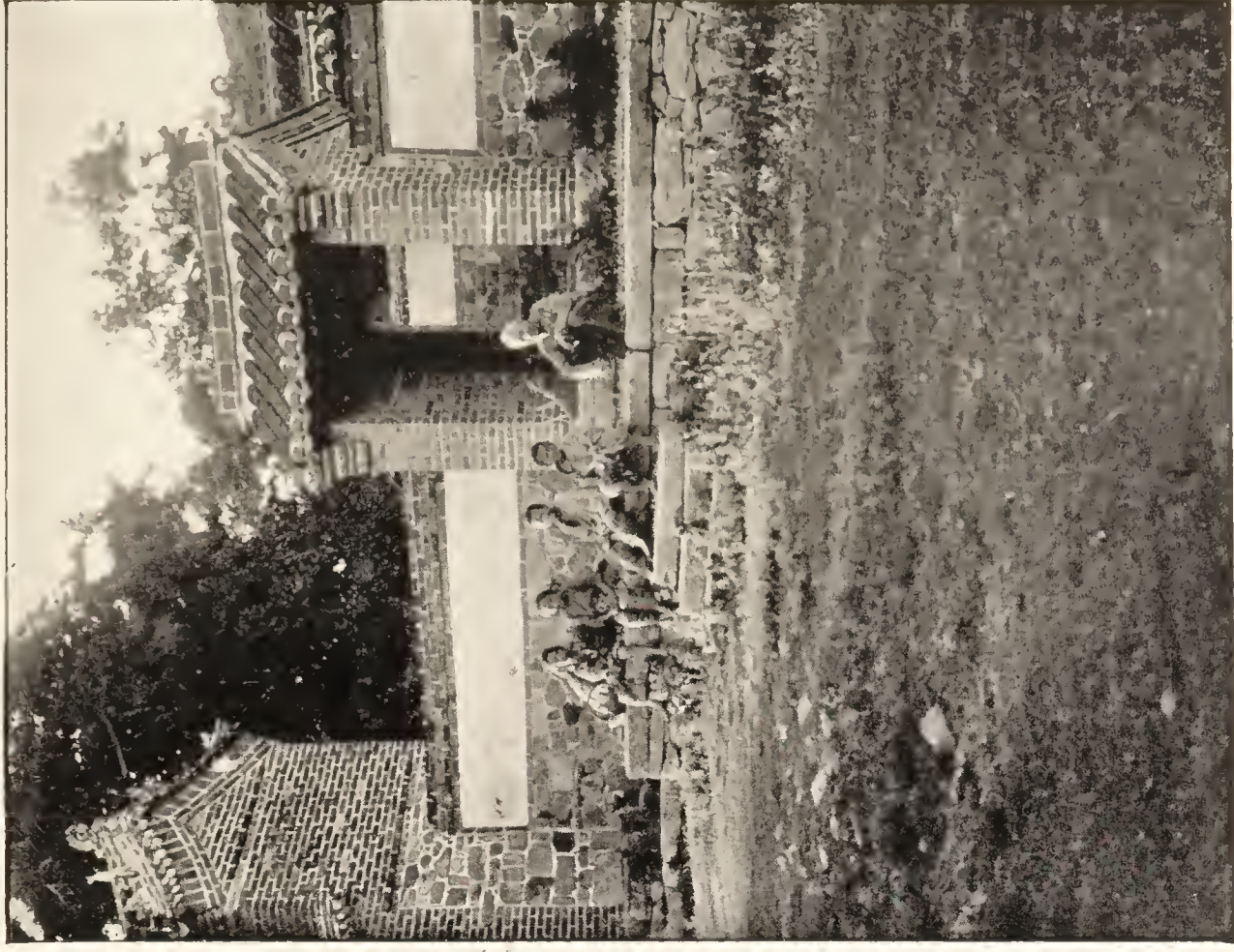
<sup>2</sup> The Rev. T. Macgowan, *Sidelights on Chinese Life*, p. 83.





SHRINE ON SUMMIT OF KU SHAN (see p. 396).

p. 414]



VILLAGERS AT A TEMPLE DOORWAY (see p. 415).





goddess is endowed with multiple personalities it is obvious that she cannot possibly be present in every image, and that all these clay figures are therefore merely lifeless statues which fulfil a useful enough function in exciting the devotional feelings of worshippers who might feel unable to offer up prayers to a blank wall. If the Christian urges that the Chinese worshipper of Kuan Yin is still an idolater because there is no such person as Kuan Yin either in the material world or in the spiritual and that therefore nothing remains to worship but the image, it may at least be tentatively suggested that if indeed there be a God of Love then the prayers that fly forth on the wings of sincerity from an upright heart will not be allowed—though they be misdirected—to flutter aimlessly for ever in some dark region of Godlessness.

That the Chinese sometimes treat the images of their gods or saints as if they were sentient creatures is true enough. They are taken out in processions, for example, and sometimes—if public prayers have been disregarded—they are buffeted and even mutilated. This is simply another instance of the remarkable inconsistency that seems to go hand in hand with religious opinions all over the world, and in the case of the most ignorant classes is doubtless due to the fact that many uneducated people cannot conceive of the existence of a being that is in no way cognisable by the bodily senses. Is Christendom free from such inconsistency? Certainly not in the matter of images,<sup>1</sup> as any one may see for himself at any time in southern Europe and elsewhere. There is a story told of St. Bernard, who eight hundred years ago knelt in a cathedral in front of an image of Mary. Devoutly and fervently he commenced to pray: "O gracious, mild and highly favoured Mother of God," he began: when lo! the image opened its lips and vouchsafed an answer. "Welcome,

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 335 *seq.*

my Bernard!" it said. In high displeasure the saint rose to his feet. "Silence!" he said, with a frown at his holy patron. "No woman is allowed to speak in the congregation."

Let us pass this over as a fable, for it finds no place in the *Aurea Legenda* and is useful only as an indication that St. Bernard, though doubtless a true disciple of St. Paul,<sup>1</sup> took a somewhat ungenerous view of women's rights. But there are other facts to be noted which are not fables. "Is it not notorious," says Max Müller, "what treatment the images of saints receive at the hands of the lower classes in Roman Catholic countries? Della Valle relates that Portuguese sailors fastened the image of St. Anthony to the bowsprit, and then addressed him kneeling, with the following words: 'O St. Anthony, be pleased to stay there till thou hast given us a fair wind for our voyage.' Frezier writes of a Spanish captain who tied a small image of the Virgin Mary to the mast, declaring that it should hang there till it had granted him a favourable wind. Kotzebue declares that the Neapolitans whip their saints if they do not grant their requests."<sup>2</sup> In a missionary's account of China I recently came across a statement to the effect that in this land of idolatry, gamblers and other evil-doers will sometimes take the precaution of bandaging their idols' eyes so that the divinity may not be aware of what they are doing. This I believe is true enough, and it proves that in such cases, at least, the clay figures are supposed to be endowed with human senses; unless indeed the real idea at the root of the proceeding is connected with what is known as sympathetic magic: "As I bandage the eyes of the god's image so the eyes of the god himself (wherever he may be) will for the nonce be sightless." But even this practice is not unknown

<sup>1</sup> 1 Corinthians, chap. xiv. 34-5.

<sup>2</sup> *Lectures on the Origin of Religion* (1901 ed.), p. 106 Cf. also Farnell's *Evolution of Religion*, pp. 41-8.



to Christendom, however repugnant it may be to Christianity. In the passage from which I have just quoted Max Müller goes on to mention an analogous practice in Russia: "Russian peasants, we are told, cover the face of an image when they are doing anything unseemly, nay, they even borrow their neighbours' saints if they have proved themselves particularly successful."<sup>1</sup>

There are Protestant missionaries who will agree that in tolerating superstitions of this kind the Roman Catholics and the Greek Church are as bad or nearly as bad as the Chinese themselves—and they will not hesitate to let their Chinese "enquirers" know what their opinions on the subject are. The Rev. J. Edkins, in describing a great Roman Catholic establishment at Shanghai, remarks that "it caused us some painful reflections to see them forming images of Joseph and Mary and other Scripture personages, in the same way that idol-makers in the neighbouring towns were moulding Buddhas and gods of war and riches, destined too to be honoured in much the same manner."<sup>2</sup> Elsewhere the same writer remarks that "unfortunately, Catholicism must always carry with it the worship of the Madonna, the masses for the dead, the crucifix and the rosary. Some of the books the Jesuits have published in Chinese contain the purest Christian truth; but it is an unhappy circumstance that they must be accompanied by others which teach frivolous superstition."<sup>3</sup> It is interesting to observe with what comfortable confidence the Protestant missionary tacitly assumes infallibility as to what does and what does not constitute *the purest Christian truth* and what is and what is not *frivolous superstition*. Noah's ark and Jonah's whale would no doubt come under the former heading, the doctrine of the Real Presence under the latter. Yet Dr. Edkins

<sup>1</sup> *Lectures on the Origin of Religion* (1901 ed.), p. 106.

<sup>2</sup> *Religion in China* (1893 ed.), p. 169.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 14.

might have remembered that Roman Catholicism and the Eastern (Greek) Church embrace, after all, an exceedingly large part of Christendom, and are just as confident of their own possession of the truth as he was. As for Protestants, if they have refrained from worshipping pictures and images, have they not come perilously near worshipping a Book?

No wonder Emergency Committees and English University officials are bestirring themselves to find means for the education of China when they are told, for example, that the people of that country from the Emperor downwards believe that an eclipse signifies the eating of the sun or moon by a celestial dog or a dragon. Perhaps it may be worth while to dwell a little on this particular superstition. I will not venture to deny that this quaint belief is honestly held by many, but I may say that after questioning very many Chinese, mostly ignorant and illiterate, on this threadbare subject I have only discovered one who appeared (after cross-examination) sincerely to believe that eclipses are caused by a hungry beast. That person was an old woman (only half Chinese by race) who kept a tea-house near Tali in western Yunnan. Her confession of belief, I may add, was greeted with roars of laughter by the crowd of Chinese coolies who were sipping their tea close by and who heard my question and the woman's reply.

In Dr. Tylor's great work we read that the Chiquitos of South America "thought" that the moon in an eclipse was hunted across the sky by huge dogs, and they raised frightful howls and lamentation to drive them off; the Caribs "thought" that the demon Maboya, hater of light, was seeking to devour the sun and moon, and danced and howled all night to scare him away; the Peruvians "imagined" that a monstrous beast was eating the moon and shouted and sounded musical instruments to frighten him, and even beat their own dogs in order to make them join in the general uproar. Other similar theories existed in



North America also.<sup>1</sup> It is curious to find such customs existing in both Asia and America. Some have thought that Fu-sang,<sup>2</sup> the mysterious land of bliss and immortality, which according to song and legend lay very far away in the eastern ocean, was a portion of the American continent;<sup>3</sup> and it has even been held that an ambassador from Fu-sang (or a Chinese who had visited Fu-sang and had safely returned) was received at the Chinese Imperial Court, where he gave an account of the strange land. China's possible knowledge of the existence of the American continent in prehistoric days is a fascinating subject that we cannot pursue here, but with reference to the accounts of the American eclipse-theories one feels inclined to ask whether the peoples named were as a matter of fact convinced of the truth of the dog or demon theory while they were beating tom-toms and shouting themselves hoarse, or whether the practices referred to by Dr. Tylor did not merely represent the survival in comparatively civilised times of a custom which in a ruder age had been based on a real belief. This would not of course mean—either in China or America—that the belief might not still be vaguely held by ignorant women and children and even in a thoughtless way by many average men. They would “believe” that some horrid beast was eating the sun just as a modern child—the Victorian child, at least, if not the Edwardian—usually “believed” that Santa Claus was a benevolent old gentleman who entered people's houses by way of the chimney.

There are always people to be found in every race whose minds are of the receptive but unanalytic order—people who continue to believe anything they have been told in childhood simply because it does not occur to them to ask questions or to think out

<sup>1</sup> Tylor's *Primitive Culture* (4th ed.), vol. i. pp. 328 *seq.*

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 21, 24–5. To the Japanese Fu-sang is known as *Fusō*.

<sup>3</sup> See *Mémoire sur Fou-sang*, by M. le Marquis d'Hervey de Saint-Denys. (Paris, 1876.)

problems for themselves. Whether such a mental attitude is worthy of being called an attitude of "belief" is another matter. What makes it suspiciously probable that the shouting and uproar among certain American tribes was merely a ceremonial survival from a primitive age is the fact that entirely different and much more reasonable theories of the cause of a lunar or solar eclipse were known and apparently assented to by the very people who nominally believed in the hungry-dog theory. "Passing on from these most primitive conceptions," says Dr. Tylor, "it appears that natives of both South and North America fell upon philosophic myths somewhat nearer the real facts of the case, insomuch as they admit that the sun and moon cause eclipses of one another."<sup>1</sup> A further significant observation is made that the Aztecs, "as part of their remarkable astronomical knowledge, seem to have had an idea of the real cause of eclipses," yet "kept up a relic of the old belief by continuing to speak in mythologic phrase of the sun and moon being eaten."

It is the old story, that to introduce changes into religious ceremonial is considered impious or sacrilegious, even when the advance of knowledge renders such ceremonial meaningless. One hears of stone knives being used by priests for sacrificial purposes long ages after metal has come into common use, simply because a kind of sanctity is attached to the form of instrument that was used when the sacrificial rite itself was young: though it had only been selected originally because in the stone age nothing better was available. One of the stone knives of some Western Churches is the so-called Creed of St. Athanasius. There are many other stone implements in the ecclesiastical armouries of the West, but some of them are cunningly carved and regilded from time to time so that as long as no one examines them too critically they are regarded without disfavour.

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 329.



But the carving and gilding will not hide their imperfections for ever.

Writing of events at Canton, Dr. Wells Williams says that "an almost total eclipse of the moon called out the entire population, each one carrying something with which to make a noise, kettles, pans, sticks, drums, gongs, guns, crackers and what not to frighten away the dragon of the sky from his hideous feast . . . silence gradually resumed its sway as the moon recovered her fulness."<sup>1</sup> Dr. Williams does not say so, but the fact was that the townspeople were simply availing themselves of a recognised and legitimate opportunity to have what English schoolboys might call a "rag." If he had scrutinised the faces of the gong-beaters he would have observed that the prevailing feelings were those of mirth and good-humour, not of terror at the occurrence of a distressing celestial calamity. The stereotyped nature of the official ceremonies (in which every action is carefully prescribed) that take place during an eclipse, not to mention the fact that eclipses have for centuries been regularly foretold by the Court astronomers, ought to be sufficient to show that the noisy ceremonial is merely a rather interesting survival from an age of complete scientific ignorance and perhaps barbarism.

It seems very possible, indeed, that the eclipse-theory supposed to be generally held in China is not a traditional inheritance of the Chinese race but came to them in comparatively recent times from some less civilised neighbour, possibly an Indian or a central Asiatic race. It is hardly likely to have come from America; for even if the Fu-sang stories are not mere fairy-tales it is not probable that China can have borrowed her superstitions from so distant a source. If China was foolish enough to borrow the beast-theory from India, she may at least retort that it was borrowed by Europe too: for the same theory, with

<sup>1</sup> *The Middle Kingdom* (1883 ed.), vol. i. p. 819.

or without variations, has existed even on the Continent and in the British Isles.<sup>1</sup>

It is noteworthy that the oldest books extant in the Chinese language mention eclipses but give no hint of the beast-theory, and the philosopher Wang Ch'ung (first century A.D.), whose delight it was to demolish foolish superstitions, mentions several explanations (wise and foolish) of eclipses without directly or indirectly referring to that which we have been considering. He would certainly have referred to it if it had been known to him. Whatever may have been the date of their first observance, the official eclipse-rites (which are said to have been recently abolished by order of the Prince-Regent) continued to exist through the centuries simply because, partly from political motives, Chinese Governments have always been very reluctant to interfere with established customs. Much of the imperial ritual carried on at the present day in connection with the worship of Heaven and Earth is a pure matter of form so far as religious belief goes. If the Emperor gave up the grand ceremonials conducted annually at the Altar of Heaven it would doubtless be interpreted to mean that he had lost faith in his own divine right to rule and that the Manchu dynasty was about to abdicate the throne.

On the whole, then, we may conclude that in spite of appearances the Chinese do not, as a nation, hold that when the moon is passing through the earth's shadow it means that the moon is being devoured by a hungry dragon. That very many Chinese will profess belief in the dragon, if suddenly asked about the cause of an eclipse, is perfectly true. Somewhat similarly, many an Englishman, if suddenly asked what became of Red Riding Hood's grandmother, would probably reply without hesitation that the wretched old lady was eaten by a wicked wolf.

<sup>1</sup> Tylor, *op. cit.* vol. i. pp. 333-4. The superstition exists throughout Indo-China and the Malay Peninsula. See, for instance, Skeat's *Malay Magic*, pp. 11-13.



A missionary writer already quoted states that though the Chinese are gifted with a keen sense of humour, "when they come to deal with the question of spirits and ghosts and ogres they seem to lose their reasoning faculties, and to believe in the most outrageous things that a mind with an ordinary power of the perception of the ludicrous would shrink from admitting."<sup>1</sup> That the Chinese (like multitudes of Europeans) do believe in some outrageous and ridiculous things I am quite ready to admit, but it is necessary again to emphasise the undoubted fact that many Chinese (like multitudes of Europeans) seem to believe in a great deal more than they really do, and that what seems like active belief is often nothing more than a passive acquiescence in tradition. Let us remember that in China, as in our own Western lands, relics of early barbarism hold their own through ages of civilisation "by virtue of the traditional sanctity which belongs to survival from remote antiquity."<sup>2</sup> As time goes on and knowledge grows (especially among the mothers of the race) many of the unreasonable forms of traditional belief and many of the crude ideas which are accepted in China because traditional, though not really believed in, will gradually decay and disappear; arms and heads will fall off clay images and will not be replaced; temple-roofs will fall in and will not be repaired; annual processions and festivals will be kept up because they provide holidays for hard-working adults and are a source of delight to the children, but will gradually become more and more secular in character; while ghosts and devils will be relegated to the care of lovers of folklore or (perhaps with truer wisdom) submitted as subjects of serious study to a future Chinese society for psychical research.

It often happens that a writer on matters connected with religion in a "heathen" land will tell little stories

<sup>1</sup> Rev. J. Macgowan, *op. cit.* p. 67.

<sup>2</sup> Tylor, *op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 167.

intended to illustrate the unsatisfying nature of the "heathen" rites, thus leaving the inference to be drawn that what the unhappy "pagans" are unconsciously in want of is Christianity with its crystallised statements of truth. Such a little story is the following, told by a writer upon whose pages I have drawn more than once.<sup>1</sup> " 'What have you gained to-day in your appeal to the goddess?' I asked of a man that I had seen very devout in his prayers. He looked at me with a quick and searching glance. 'You ask me what answer I have got to my petition to the goddess?' he said. 'Yes,' I replied, 'that is what I want to know from you.' 'Well, you have asked me more than I can tell you. The whole question of the idols is a profoundly mysterious one that no one can fathom. Whether they do or can help people is something I cannot tell. I worship them because my fathers did so before me, and if they were satisfied, so must I be. The whole thing is a mystery,' and he passed on with the look of a man who was puzzled with a problem that he could not solve, and that look is a permanent one on the face of the nation to-day."

Perhaps there are a good many Englishmen and Americans who on reading this instructive little dialogue may be tempted to sympathise not a little with the idol-worshipper. A profound mystery that no one can fathom! I worship them because my fathers did so before me! Are there not thousands and thousands of Western people who might in all sincerity use those very words? For in spite of everything that all the Churches and all the prophets and all the philosophers have done for us, in spite of all we have learned from dogmas and revelations and sacred books, we are still groping in darkness. *The whole thing is a mystery*, and the man who can solve it is wiser than any man who has yet lived. Yes, inevitably replies the Protestant missionary, but God can solve it: and he has done so,

<sup>1</sup> Rev. J. Macgowan, *op. cit.* pp. 92-3.



for to us He has revealed the Truth. Not to you, but to Me! cries the Holy Catholic Church. Not to you, but to us! cry the Anglican and the Baptist and the Unitarian and the Quaker and the Theist and the Swedenborgian and the Mormon and the Seventh Day Adventist and the Christian Scientist and the Plymouth Brother and the Theosophist. Not to you, but to us! cry the Jew and the Mohammedan and the Brahman and the Sikh and the Bábist and the Zoroastrian.

What is Truth?

The Castle of Religion is guarded by an ever-watchful band of armoured giants called Creeds and Dogmas. When a lonely knight-errant rides up to the castle gate eager to liberate the lady Truth who he knows lies somewhere within, he is met by the giant warders, who repel him with menaces and blows. "You seek Truth?" they exclaim. "You need go no further. We are Truth." Some think that if the giants were slain the lordly castle itself would fade like a dream. Why should it fade? More likely is it that nothing but their defeat and death can save the time-battered walls from crumbling to utter decay; that only then the drawbridge will fall and the darkened windows blaze into lines of festal light; that only by stepping across those huge prostrate forms shall we ever come face to face with the Lady of the Castle—no more a manacled captive, but free and ready to step forth, gloriously apparelled and radiant with beauty, to receive for the first time a world's homage. From the lips of Truth herself will the question of the jesting Pilate at last be answered.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE FUTURE

THE past history of Weihaiwei is not such as to justify very high expectations of a dazzling future. It has never tasted the sweets of commercial prosperity and perhaps it is hardly likely to do so in days to come. Its situation near the eastern extremity of Shantung is such that the ports of Chefoo and Tsingtao are almost inevitably bound to intercept the greater part of the trade that might otherwise reach it from west or south, while ocean-borne merchandise is not likely to find its way into the northern provinces of China through the gateway of Weihaiwei when there are ports, more favourably situated as distributing centres, a few scores of miles further westward. Weihaiwei has a valuable asset in its harbour, which is superior to that of Chefoo, though its superiority is hardly so great as to neutralise its several disadvantages. Yet the very unsuitability of the port for purposes of commerce tends to increase its potential value as a naval base—if, indeed, all naval bases do not become obsolete in the rapidly-approaching era of aerial warfare. The Chinese naval officer of the future may congratulate himself on the fact that here can arise no conflict of naval and mercantile interests, such as is bound to occur from time to time in ports like Hongkong. The deep-water anchorage of Weihaiwei is not large enough to accommodate a squadron of battleships as



well as a fleet of ocean liners, and if Weihaiwei were to develop into a great naval port it is difficult to see how in any circumstances it could show much hospitality to merchant shipping.

The naval authorities of China, therefore, would have it "all their own way" in one of the best harbours of north China. They could build forts, carry out big-gun practice in the neighbouring waters, land men and guns for martial exercises at all points along the coast, establish naval depôts and dockyards on the island and the mainland, all at a minimum of cost and without in any appreciable degree interfering with vested interests ashore. All this was recognised by the Chinese Government long ago, when Weihaiwei was, as a matter of fact, a military and naval station second only in importance to the Manchurian fortress of Port Arthur.

The conspicuous and not inglorious part played by Weihaiwei during the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-5 has already been mentioned. Many of the guns which, it was vainly hoped, would effectually protect the approaches to the eastern entrance to the harbour, are still lying amid the ruins of a chain of forts extending from the village of Hai-pu to that of Hsieh-chia-so. The fine military road that connected the forts is now in many places barely traceable, for its masonry has been carted away by unsentimental Chinese farmers for use in the construction of dwelling-houses, and here and there the road itself has actually been ploughed up and made to yield a scanty crop of sweet potatoes,—for even so does the prosaic spirit of agricultural enterprise avenge itself upon the pomps and vanities of wicked warfare. But forts can be reconstructed, heavier and more modern guns can be purchased, military roads can be rebuilt; and this is what doubtless will take place when China has decided to undertake the task of creating a fleet of warships and of re-establishing Weihaiwei as a naval base.

But, the bewildered reader may ask, where does

Great Britain come in? Is not Weihaiwei a British Colony? If forts are to be built, will they not be British forts; if war-fleets are to ride at anchor in the harbour of Weihaiwei, will they not be British fleets? The answer to this is that the British Government had given up all idea of fortifying Weihaiwei even before the result of the Russo-Japanese war and the fall of Port Arthur had drawn attention to the merely temporary nature of the occupation of Weihaiwei. Moreover, Weihaiwei is not officially recognised as an integral portion of the King's "dominions beyond the seas"; it is occupied and administered by Great Britain, but its inhabitants—as we have already seen<sup>1</sup>—are not, with technical accuracy, to be described as British subjects. Weihaiwei has never been ceded to the British Crown, and when it is restored to China the British Crown will suffer no diminution of lustre, though doubtless unjustifiable murmurs will be heard concerning the damage to British prestige. As to when rendition is to take place, this is entirely a matter for international agreement; though it will be remembered that the date of the expiration of the original Russian lease of Port Arthur will not take place until March 1923.<sup>2</sup>

As the trade of Weihaiwei is (at least from the point of view of European mercantile interests) almost a

<sup>1</sup> See p. 85.

<sup>2</sup> In Article iii. of the "Port Arthur and Talienwan Agreement" between Russia and China it is provided that "the duration of the lease shall be twenty-five years from the day this treaty is signed [March 27, 1898], but may be extended by mutual agreement between Russia and China." It may be noted that the British, German and Russian treaties with respect to the leases of Weihaiwei, of the Kowloon Extension (ninety-nine years), of Kiaochou (ninety-nine years) and Port Arthur (twenty-five years), all stipulate that Chinese war-vessels, whether neutral or not, retain the right to the free use of the several leased harbours. It is a right that seems to be seldom exercised. The ultimate "sovereignty" of China over the various leased territories is specially safeguarded in the treaties relating to Kiaochou and Port Arthur, and has been admitted in respect of Weihaiwei.



negligible quantity, it may be said that the place is useful to Great Britain only as a summer resort for her warships stationed in Far Eastern seas: and it may be observed that as the port is totally unfortified the interests of the British Navy would hardly suffer if the whole of the mainland territory were unreservedly restored to China and only the island of Liukung and the right to use the waters of the harbour retained in British hands. An arrangement of this kind, however, would only be welcomed by China so long as she was without a navy of her own.

A question that is often asked by Western visitors to Weihaiwei is one that does not directly concern the Government either of China or of Great Britain. Are the people of Weihaiwei pleased with British rule? Would they be glad or sorry to pass once more under the yoke of Chinese administrators? That the people appreciate the benefits directly or indirectly conferred upon them by the British occupation there is no reason to doubt.<sup>1</sup> That trade—external and internal—is brisker, that the people are more prosperous, that money circulates more freely and more abundantly, that roads and other means of communication have been greatly improved—all these things are fully realised. But though the shopkeepers and contractors on the island and in Port Edward would undoubtedly vote—if they had the chance—for the perpetuation of present conditions, I have no doubt that if the matter were to be decided by a secret ballot among all the people of the Territory a very great preponderance of votes would be given for the resumption of Chinese rule.

It is perhaps unnecessary to cast about for reasons why this should be so. Many Europeans ridicule the notion that the Chinese possess the virtue of patriotism. Even if there be no patriotism (a very rash assumption after all) there is certainly a strong racial feeling in

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 93 *seq.*

China: and when race and nation are one it may perhaps be plausibly argued that racial sentiment and patriotic sentiment come to be interchangeable terms. Granting that patriotism or some analogous sentiment does exist among the people of China, surely no Englishman need look further for a reasonable cause why the evacuation of Weihaiwei should be welcomed by the people.<sup>1</sup> The Chinese of Weihaiwei do not like to be ruled by foreigners any more than the average Englishman would care to see Spanish rule—let us say—established in the Isle of Wight, quite irrespective of the merits or demerits of the foreign rulers and their system of government.

Too much stress should not be laid on the alleged racial antipathy between White and Yellow, inasmuch as there is no strong basis for the too common view that the people of East and West are so differently constituted that they must always remain spiritually and intellectually sundered. What is often mistaken for a barrier of race is in many cases, I believe, merely a barrier of language. The number of men—Chinese or English—who can be said to have a scholarly knowledge of the two languages is still astonishingly small.<sup>2</sup> Yet there is unfortunately little doubt that the

<sup>1</sup> It has been urged in some quarters that the occupation of Kiaochou by Germany and that of Weihaiwei by Great Britain are specially objected to by the Chinese on the ground that Shantung, through its associations with Confucius, Mencius, Chou Kung and other ancient sages, is China's Sacred Province, and one that ought to remain inviolate. There is no reason to suppose that this notion has any basis in fact. The Chinese undoubtedly regard certain districts in the south-west of Shantung with immense reverence, more particularly the district of Ch'ü-fou, which contains the temple and tomb of Confucius, but no pre-eminent sanctity attaches to the province as a whole. The province of Shantung, indeed, did not exist as such in Confucius's time. If China's provinces were to be arranged in order of sanctity or inviolability it is probable that both Honan and Shensi would, for historical reasons, take precedence of Shantung.

<sup>2</sup> There are many Chinese who speak English fluently, and the number is increasing daily, but as a rule such persons have devoted so much time to the acquirement of a totally alien tongue, and



antagonism between Europe and Asia, whether the causes be racial or merely political, is in some respects steadily growing stronger, and it is difficult to see

"Western learning" generally, that they have been obliged to neglect the culture of their own country. (One of the greatest dangers ahead of China is the possibility that her foreign-educated students may, through ignorance, grow contemptuous of the intellectual achievements of their ancestors, and that Chinese culture may consequently suffer a long, though probably it would not be a permanent, eclipse.) There are also some Englishmen who can speak Chinese fluently, but very few of them have had the time or inclination to acquire a sound knowledge of Chinese literature. Thus it too often happens that an educated Englishman and an educated Chinese whose natures are such that they might become intimate friends, fail to become so through inability to exchange ideas in the region of politics, philosophy, literature or art. A German and an Englishman, even if they disagree on the subject of naval armaments, may find themselves at one in the matter of the music of Mozart or the psychological condition of the mind of Hamlet. Between an Englishman and a Frenchman a friendship may spring up on the basis of a common admiration for the prose of Flaubert or Anatole France or the philosophy of Bergson. But though there are now many Chinese who can discourse fluently on evolution or the conservation of energy, how many Western students of Chinese would bear themselves creditably in a conversation with a Chinese scholar on the ethics of Chu Hsi or the poetry of Su Tung-po? In the vast majority of cases, conversation between a Chinese and an Englishman (unless the relation between them is that of teacher and pupil) is very apt to degenerate into the merest "small talk" and exchange of civilities, and it is obvious that friendships can hardly be built up on so slender a foundation as this. But among those Europeans and Chinese who have successfully surmounted the barrier of language there is, I believe, nothing to prevent the growth of sincere friendships. Yet it should be observed that a recognition of the possibility of intimate social intercourse between European and Chinese does not necessarily imply an acceptance of the view that the races may safely and successfully intermarry. This point must be emphasised, for my own views on the subject have been to some extent misapprehended by a very friendly critic in *The Spectator* (August 22, 1908, p. 268). This question is really one for biological experts, and no definite answer has yet been given to it, though Herbert Spencer, we know, was strongly of opinion that the white and yellow races should not mingle their blood. From the physiological point of view the question is, of course, in no way concerned with any fanciful theories as to one race being "higher" than another. (For Herbert Spencer's views see the Appendix to Lafcadio Hearn's *Japan: an Interpretation*.)

how we can expect that antagonism to diminish so long as present political conditions subsist. Asiatics, rightly or wrongly, are acquiring the notion that European dominion in the East has been due not to any intrinsic superiority (biological, intellectual or moral) of the white races, but chiefly to temporary and (speaking unphilosophically) accidental circumstances that will soon cease to exist. One noble Asiatic nation has definitely and probably for ever freed herself from "the White Peril," and it is not unnatural that other nations in Asia should aspire to do the same.

"The real cause of unrest," it has been recently said,<sup>1</sup> "is not Indian at all, but Asiatic. The unrest is the most visible symptom of that resentment of prolonged European domination which is affecting the whole continent of Asia. For 300 years the tide of European dominion has flowed eastward, but the ebb has now set in. Liao-yang and Mukden, the driving back of the legions of the Tsar, gave it a stimulus far more potent than if Bengal had been administratively divided into forty pieces. It would probably have arisen even if Japan had still remained in chain-armour, and had never emerged from the control of her Tycoons and her Samurai. It became inevitable from the day that steam and quick transit broke down the barriers of India's isolation, and her yielding people began to cross the seas. It is part of a great world-movement, the end of which no man can foresee. No concessions, however sweeping, will conjure it. We have to reckon with its continued—and most natural—increase and growth, and to shape our course accordingly."

This is not very pleasant reading for English—or indeed for European—ears, but if the facts are as stated there is nothing to be gained by ignoring them.

Setting patriotism and racial prejudices aside, there

<sup>1</sup> See an able article on "Britain's Future in India," in *The Times* of June 28, 1909.



are other reasons why British rule could never become really popular in Weihaiwei or in any part of China. With every wish to rule the people according to their own customs and their traditional systems of morality, it is not always possible to do so without a surrender of much that a European considers essential to good order and a proper administration of justice. The different views of East and West on a matter so fundamental as the rights and duties of individuals as compared with the rights and duties of the family or clan are alone sufficient to give rise to a popular belief that the foreign courts do not always dispense justice. Then the Chinese believe that our courts are much too severe on many offences that they consider venial, and not severe enough on offences such as burglary, piracy and armed robbery. They also detest our insistence, in certain circumstances, of the *post-mortem* examination of human bodies. Again, they totally fail to understand why men who have been charged with a crime and whose guilt in the eyes of the "plain man" is a certainty should sometimes get off scot-free on account of some technicality or legal quibble. If Englishmen are sometimes driven to think that "the law is an ass," we may be sure that the Chinese are, at times, even more strongly inclined to the same opinion.

If one were to ask a native of Weihaiwei what were the characteristics of British rule that he most appreciated one would perhaps expect him to emphasise the comparative freedom from petty extortion and tyranny, the obvious endeavour (not always successful) to dispense even-handed justice, the facilities for trade, the improvement of means of communication. It was not an answer of this kind, however, that I received from an intelligent and plain-spoken resident to whom I put this very question. "What is it we like best in our British rulers? I will tell you," he said. "Our native roads are narrow pathways, and very often there is no room for two persons

to pass unless one yields the road to the other. When our last rulers—the Japanese—met our small-footed women hobbling along such a path they never stepped aside to let the women pass, but compelled them to clamber along the stony hillside or to stand in a ditch. An Englishman, on the contrary, whether mounted or on foot, always leaves the road to the woman. He will walk deliberately into a deep snow-drift rather than let a Chinese woman step off the dry pathway. We have come to understand that the men of your honourable country all act in the same way, and this is what we like about Englishmen."

It may seem strange that a native should draw attention to a trivial matter of this kind rather than to some of the admirable features—as we regard them—of British administration, yet there is very little just cause for surprise. A year or two ago the correspondent of a great newspaper indulgently referred to Weihaiwei under British rule as affording a conspicuous example of the ability of individual Englishmen to control—without fuss or display of force—large masses of Orientals. Let it be granted that the English people, or rather some Englishmen, are endowed with the twin-instincts to rule with justice and integrity and to serve with industry and loyalty—for it is only the union of these two instincts or qualities in one personality that distinguishes the good administrator: but to regard Weihaiwei as an example of the English power of successfully ruling hordes of alien subjects shows a misapprehension of the facts. Englishmen, Irishmen and Scotsmen have carried out such splendid administrative work in other parts of the world that there is no need to give them credit for work which they have not done. What makes the people of Weihaiwei law-abiding, peaceful, industrious, punctual in the payment of taxes, honest in their dealings one with another is not some mysterious ruling faculty on the part of the three or four foreign administrators who are





TWO BRITISH RULERS ON THE MARCH, WITH MULE-  
LITTER AND HORSE (sec p. 434).

p. 434]



A ROADSIDE SCENE (see p. 196).





placed over them, but something that has existed in China from a time when the ancestors of those administrators were painted savages and England was not even a name: it is filial piety, it is reverence for law and respect for those in authority, it is the cult of ancestors,—it is, in short, Confucianism. “The same readiness with which we serve our father,” says one of the Chinese classics, “we should employ in serving our Ruler, and the reverence must be the same for both. To honour those who are in a high position and to respect those who are in authority is our first duty.” Again, we are told that “Confucius said, the Ruler is served with observance of *hsiao* [filial piety] and elders are served with such submission as is due from a younger brother to his elder brothers, which shows that the people should make no distinction.”<sup>1</sup>

If the Weihaiwei Government deserves any commendation at all it is only for its acceptance of Confucian principles as the basis of administration. Confucianism, indeed, is the foundation of the civil law that is administered in the British Courts, Confucian customs are wherever possible upheld and enforced by the officials in their executive and judicial capacities, and it is by the recognition of Confucianism that the Government has been able to dismiss its armed force. Philostratus, about seventeen hundred years ago, wrote a book in which he tells us how Apollonius of Tyana was one day walking with his friend and disciple Damis when they met a small boy riding an enormous elephant. Damis expressed surprise at the ease and skill with which the youngster could control and guide so huge a beast; but Apollonius succeeded in convincing him that the credit was due not to the small boy's skill, but to the elephant's own docility and self-control. Should we be far wrong if we were to regard the people of

<sup>1</sup> These translations are from Dr. De Groot's *Religious System of China*, vol. ii. p. 508.

Weihaiwei as the elephant and the local Government as the little boy that rode it? Perhaps, indeed, the parallel might be applied to British dependencies greater and more important than Weihaiwei.

The people of this corner of China are so ill-acquainted with the politics of their country—for there is no local newspaper, and if there were it would have but few readers—that they possess but the haziest notion of the probable destiny of their port in the event of its rendition to China and the creation of a modern Chinese navy. But indeed even Europeans could hardly enlighten them as to the probabilities of the future of Weihaiwei unless they were furnished with some clue to the solution of a much vaster problem—the future of China herself.

It is most earnestly to be hoped for China's own sake that her rulers do not seriously intend, at present, to place naval expansion in the forefront of their numerous schemes for reform. The subject is one upon which a section of the native Press has become somewhat enthusiastic, and the recent visit to England of a Chinese Naval Commission, under the leadership of an Imperial prince, naturally leads one to suppose that the Government is actually about to undertake the exceedingly difficult, dangerous and most costly work of securing for China a place among the Naval Powers. Many of China's Western sympathisers—especially those who have not lived in the East—probably regard this as the best possible proof that China is "pulling herself together" and is already far advanced on the road of regeneration. But there is hardly a man among China's foreign friends and sympathisers resident in the East who does not regard the navy scheme with dismay and disappointment. At some future date the Chinese may be fully justified in acquiring a great navy, but to build a really serviceable modern fleet at the present time is to invite a financial and political disaster of appalling magnitude. Even if the project comes to



nothing it is a bad omen for the future that the Chinese Government should give it serious consideration at a time when all the energies and resources of the Empire should be devoted to internal reform and development. If China's responsible rulers do not realise the precarious position into which the country has drifted and the pressing necessity of administrative reform, they are not fit to hold the helm of the State. Common sense—if they are devoid of the higher qualities of statesmanship—should tell them that until the existing departments of Government have been thoroughly reorganised, corruption stamped out, and a spirit of loyalty and patriotism infused into all ranks of the Civil Service, the creation of a great spending department, such as an Admiralty or Naval Board, will merely add enormously to the financial burdens of the country without providing it with any reliable safeguard or protection in the event of war.

The unfortunate thing is that every warning of this kind received by China from her foreign friends is received by her with doubt and suspicion. She has realised that in one foreign war after another her military and naval weakness has led her—or has helped to lead her—through the dark shadows of defeat and humiliation, and she is intensely desirous of making such provision for her own protection that in future foreign wars she may not be foredoomed to disaster. When she is advised to content herself, for the present, with a small though well-equipped army and the most modest of coast-defence fleets, she suspects that her advisers wish to keep her in a state of perpetual weakness, so that they may continue to help themselves, from time to time, to treaty-ports, trade privileges, sites for churches and other missionary buildings, mining and railway concessions and cash-indemnities. At the present time the Power which she regards with a more friendly eye than any other is undoubtedly the United States of America—the only Great Power that has occupied none of her

territory and the one against which she believes herself to have least reason for complaint. A few years ago many Western dwellers in China were inclined to predict that a powerful offensive and defensive alliance would be entered into by China and Japan, or that Japan would assume the hegemony of the Far East and having created a reformed China would draw upon the immense resources of that country to help her in establishing the supremacy of the Yellow Race in the Eastern hemisphere. One does not often hear this view expressed to-day, not only because of the repeated occurrence of serious disputes between the Chinese and Japanese Governments with reference to Manchurian and other problems, but also because it is now seen that the growth of a really strong and progressive China cannot be regarded without grave alarm by the far-seeing statesmen of Japan. The whole of the Japanese Empire, be it remembered, might be packed into one of China's provinces; the population of Japan is only about one-tenth that of China, and her natural resources are meagre compared with those of her huge neighbour. If the development of China proceeds on the same proportionate scale as that of Japan (and the Japanese themselves realise that this is no impossibility), it is difficult to see how Japan can reasonably hope to maintain her present international position.

We have heard a great deal lately about the momentous change in the European balance of power caused by the great advance of Germany in population and wealth: let us give a loose rein to our imaginations and suppose that the German Empire by skilful diplomacy or other means has further succeeded in annexing Austria, Denmark, Belgium and Holland, and by successful warfare has reduced France, Italy and Russia to a state of military imbecility. The position of Great Britain in these circumstances would, to say the least, be precarious and unenviable. If she did not become the "conscript appanage" of



a "stronger Power" (to use the warning words of a British Cabinet Minister) she would at least be in a state of chronic peril, and subject to periodical panics that might end in the disorganisation of all industry and the demoralisation of the people. England's position as opposed to that of a vastly-magnified Germany would be similar in many ways to that which Japan would occupy relatively to a reformed, united and progressive China. Indeed, Japan would be in a worse case than England: for England has beaten one Napoleon, and, by again championing the cause of the down-trodden states of a heterogeneous Europe, she might conceivably beat another; whereas Japan would perhaps find herself faced not by a single powerful tyrant, under whose dominion vassal states writhed and groaned, but by a vast homogeneous people who through careful discipline and wise statesmanship had learned to sink provincial rivalries in a splendid realisation of racial solidarity and national patriotism.

Thus we need not be surprised if during the years of China's education and growth Japanese diplomacy in respect of Chinese affairs is to some extent characterised by petulance, hesitation, vacillation, and occasional displays of "bluff."<sup>1</sup> The policy of Japan must necessarily hover between two extremes: she does not wish to see China partitioned, for this would mean a strengthening of European influence in Asia which might be disastrous to Japanese interests; nor does she wish to see China become one of the Great Powers of the world, for this would inevitably lead to her own partial eclipse. China is now well aware of the delicate position of the Japanese Foreign Office, and it is on the whole improbable that she will readily consent to a Japanese alliance, even if she finds herself

<sup>1</sup> In her purely commercial relations with China, Japan's policy will of course continue to be consistent and strenuously active. It is a vital necessity to Japan that she should enjoy a large share of China's foreign trade.

seriously menaced by the armed strength of Europe—happily a most unlikely event. She knows that the differences of opinion between Japan and the United States are not yet a forgotten chapter in international politics,<sup>1</sup> and this fact, perhaps, will make her all the readier to throw herself into the arms of the great American Republic. It is well to remember, however, that racial and industrial rivalries between China and America may some day become dangerously acute. Even now, while such rivalries loom no larger in the political firmament than a man's hand, there are whispers of storms to come. Meanwhile, China is beginning to realise that the most wide-awake of modern states does not propose to hamper her own freedom by watching over a nation that has hitherto been regarded as the most somnolent in the world. Even the strong matronly arms of the United States might grow weary of carrying about so bulky an infant as a China that only woke up in order to experience the luxurious delight of going to sleep again. The Chinese dimly understand that until they have raised themselves out of their present condition of political helplessness they cannot expect to get more from the United States or from any other Great Power than amiable professions of goodwill.

But China has not yet fully grasped the truth that military and naval strength is not the only qualification—or the principal one—that will win the respect

<sup>1</sup> "It is, I think, an error to assume that elimination of the school and immigration questions will mean complete restoration of the former Japanese-American *entente*. This never can be restored in the shape which it previously assumed. Conditions never will revert to the situation which gave it vitality. It is perhaps not going too far to say that relations of America and Japan are only now becoming serious, in the sense that they directly include propositions about which modern nations will, upon due provocation, go to war. . . . The genesis of a collision between Japan and the United States of America, if it ever occurs, will be found in conditions on the mainland of Asia." (*The Far Eastern Question*, by T. F. Millard (T. Fisher Unwin, 1909), pp. 60-61.)





THE COMMISSIONER OF WEIHAIWEI (SIR J. H. STEWART LOCKHART, K.C.M.G.), WITH PRIEST AND  
ATTENDANTS AT THE TEMPLE OF CH'ENG SHAN.





and support of the Western Powers. If she will honestly devote herself to the work of internal reform, to the thorough reorganisation of her administrative, judicial and fiscal systems, and to the loyal fulfilment of her treaty obligations, it is as certain as anything in politics can be that she will be doing far more for her own protection against foreign interference than if she were to construct a dozen coast-fortresses and naval bases and a fleet of thirty "Dreadnought" battleships. Her military weakness will not invite aggression: it might do so if she were friendless, and matched against a single ruthless strong Power or group of allied Powers, but the state of international politics at the present day is such that an orderly and progressive China is absolutely certain to find herself backed by at least two mighty friends the instant that her legitimate interests are wantonly attacked by any aggressive or adventurous foreign state.

On the other hand, if the Government adheres to its present course of alternate radicalism and conservatism and continues to play with reform schemes as if they were ninepins and foreign treaties as if they were packs of cards, the new fleet and naval bases will not only be of no avail to the country in her hour of need but will serve to hasten a catastrophe in which the dynasty, at least, will in all probability be overwhelmed and foreign intervention will once more become a painful necessity. We saw in a former chapter that to charge the Chinese, as a people, with a proclivity to untruthfulness, or at any rate to assign such untruthfulness, if it exists, to Confucianism, is erroneous and unjust. But let it be admitted at once that the charge of insincerity in politics is one that can without unfairness be brought against the Chinese Government—as, indeed, it can be brought against some other states that have had less excuse for their conduct than China.

In her transactions with Western Powers she has too often shown want of straightforwardness, duplicity, even treachery. Not only does she try to play off

one Power against another (a game that is played with more or less assiduity by every government in the world) but she makes promises which she does not intend to fulfil except under compulsion, she adopts an attitude that is now arrogant and now cringing, she is alternately dilatory and hasty, she is often hypocritical, and her perpetual changes of external and internal policy are a source of the greatest embarrassment to the governments and merchants of foreign lands and a source of gravest danger to herself. Nothing distresses the sincere friends and well-wishers of China so much as the manner in which she palters with her international obligations, unless it be her haphazard and erratic attempts at administrative reform—now hesitating and half-hearted, now extravagant and ultra-progressive.

As regards her foreign relations one is tempted to assert that Obstruction, Prevarication and Procrastination seem to be the three leading principles of Chinese statesmanship. Those who know how sound China is at heart, how able, industrious and intelligent are her sons, and how well fitted their great country is in many ways to play a grand part in the history of the world and in the development of civilisation, are perhaps even more ready than others to denounce the Manchu government of China for its gross mismanagement of the internal and external affairs of the nation, its pitiful misuse of splendid material and its shameful waste of magnificent opportunities.

It is obvious to every foreigner who knows China well that the first and most urgent necessity is the thorough reform of the entire Civil Service in all its branches. So long as offices are bought and sold, so long as salaries are so meagre that they must necessarily be supplemented in irregular ways, so long as revenue and expenditure accounts go through no proper system of audit, so long as bribery and the "squeeze" system are practically recognised as necessary features of civil administration—so long will it



be utterly futile to attempt far-reaching reforms in other directions. When these abuses have become things of the past the general progress of the country will be swift and sure, but not till then. It may be that they will never be abolished until the new Provincial Assemblies—the most striking development of Chinese political life that has been witnessed since the opening of the country to foreign intercourse—have compelled the central government to admit the popular representatives to an active share in the real business of administration.

A question was recently asked in the British House of Commons<sup>1</sup> as to whether the Chinese Government had taken any steps to carry out the provisions of Article VIII. of the Mackay Treaty relating to the abolition of the *Likin* system. The reply was that China had not yet done anything in the matter except in so far as to express a desire to enter into negotiations for an increase of the Customs tariff in return for the abolition of likin.<sup>2</sup> “In view, however, of the failure of the Chinese Government to carry out other important provisions of the Treaty of 1902, His Majesty’s Government are not at present disposed to give this proposal their support; more especially in view of the fact that new likin stations are being established in China, and that foreign trade is being subjected to likin exactions of greater frequency and amount.”

Probably the most important of the other unobserved provisions of the Mackay Treaty, to which Mr. McKinnon Wood referred, was the second article, in which China undertook to reform her currency. Financial reform (including a reorganisation and readjustment of the system of internal

<sup>1</sup> The question was asked by Captain Murray, M.P., and answered by Mr. McKinnon Wood, in September 1909

<sup>2</sup> The “Mackay” Commercial Treaty between Great Britain and China was signed at Shanghai on September 5, 1902 *Likin* is an internal tax on merchandise in transit

taxation as well as the establishment of a uniform national coinage) is, next to the thorough cleansing of the whole machinery of administration, the most urgently necessary of all the tasks that confront the Government, yet though nearly eight years have elapsed since the Mackay Treaty was signed, the only indications that the Chinese Government has given any serious consideration to this vitally important problem have consisted in the despatch of a costly Mission to enquire into the financial systems of other countries and in the periodical issue of Imperial Edicts which promise the standardisation of the coinage and other useful reforms but have not as yet been followed up by practical measures. Not to dwell upon the commercial interests of the great foreign communities of Hongkong, Shanghai and Tientsin, which are most seriously hampered by the apathy of the Chinese Government in the matter of currency reform, there can be very little doubt that if the present policy of "drift" is adhered to, the country will be gravely menaced by the peril of bankruptcy. The wiser heads among the Chinese officials know perfectly well that an inability to meet their foreign liabilities will inevitably result in the loss of the economic independence of their country, yet they hesitate to introduce the drastic financial reforms without which China cannot hope to make real progress or to assume a dignified position in the councils of nations.

Provincial independence in matters affecting currency and finance is still to a great extent unchecked; local officials still make large temporary profits out of the excessive issue of copper coin; the most elementary laws of economics are ignored; innumerable native banks are allowed to issue notes against which are held cash reserves that are generally inadequate and sometimes (so it is whispered) non-existent.<sup>1</sup> If China

<sup>1</sup> A good general view of the nature of the grave difficulties that stand in the way of currency reform may be gained from a perusal of



would declare her intention of engaging the services of a European or American Financial Adviser—the best and ablest she could get—the mere announcement would do more to re-establish her financial reputation than a hundred plausibly-worded Imperial Decrees. Yet even the ablest of advisers would accomplish little of permanent value unless he were given a free hand to deal with official corruption in high places and safeguarded against petty jealousies and underhand intrigues; and judging from the present temper of Chinese officialdom it is very doubtful whether any satisfactory guarantees of this kind would or could be given.

The Chinese, not unnaturally, resent the suggestion that they should apply to a foreign government for the loan of a guide and teacher, or that among all their millions of population they possess no able statesmen of their own; but what they should understand is this, that though there may be and probably are hundreds of Chinese officials who in intellect, energy, and devotion to duty (if not in actual experience) are quite as fully qualified to reorganise the finances of the country as any foreigner could be, yet it is inconceivable in the present state of Chinese politics that any native official, however capable and energetic, would be able to withstand and overcome the conservative forces that would certainly oppose him as soon as he began to assail the fortresses of corruption. A foreign adviser might be denounced to the Throne in memorial after memorial and yet possibly retain his position and authority; a Chinese minister who attempted to initiate reforms worthy of the approval of foreign experts would probably be overwhelmed by his enemies before a single important measure had been carried into effect.

H. B. Morse's *The Trade and Administration of the Chinese Empire* (Shanghai, 1908). See especially pp. 166–9. Another recent work well worth consulting is T. F. Millard's *The Far Eastern Question* (T. Fisher Unwin, 1909), pp. 316 *seq.*

One of the strongest reasons why the Chinese Government is reluctant to invoke the assistance of a foreign Financial Adviser is that such a step might lead to the introduction of foreign capital on an immense scale, and its gradual monopolisation of industry and exclusive exploitation of the national resources. Many recent events have shown that the Chinese people—even more than the Government—are exceedingly averse from throwing China freely open to foreign capital, even when the want of capital obviously retards the material development of the country. This attitude, though naturally enough it excites the indignation of foreign financiers and traders, who are apt to regard the matter solely from the economic standpoint, is probably only temporary, and not unjustifiable when we remember the enormous power wielded by capital in these days, not only in commerce and industry but also in international politics. Sir Alfred Lyall truly points out that the European money-market is to Asia a “most perilous snare,” and that the more any Asiatic Government runs into debt with European financiers, or has permitted the investment of foreign capital within its territory, the more it falls under the stringent, self-interested and inquisitive “political superintendence” of the capitalist state.<sup>1</sup>

That China cannot expect to develop her resources fully and rapidly without the help of European and American capital is doubtless true enough: but in view of her somewhat precarious political condition it may be that she is acting not unwisely in restricting the inflow of foreign capital to the irreducible minimum, and if she has reason to believe that the recommendations of a Financial Adviser would include the free admission of alien capital, her hesitation to avail herself of foreign expert advice may perhaps be easily explained. Chinese apprehensions on this subject

<sup>1</sup> *Asiatic Studies* (Second Series, 2nd ed.), pp. 374-5, 376-7.



might perhaps remain for ever unrealised, but at least they can hardly be said to be totally unreasonable.<sup>1</sup>

Next to finance there is perhaps no department that calls more peremptorily for foreign supervision than that of forestation. The dearth of timber throughout the greater part of north China has caused a serious deterioration of the climate within historic times, and is largely responsible for the denudation of once fertile lands and the periodical recurrence of famines. Forestry is an unknown science in China, and without foreign expert assistance it is unlikely that re-forestation will be undertaken seriously and methodically. In legal and judicial matters, education, railways, municipal government, the army, hospitals, technical institutions, and other important matters, some considerable progress has already been made with or without direct foreign assistance, though it seems obvious that until the national finances and the Civil Service have been thoroughly reorganised every effort made in the direction of other reforms must to some extent be crippled.

The Chinese are naturally most anxious to secure the abolition of the foreign rights of extra-territorial jurisdiction. They feel very keenly the undignified position of their country in respect of the fact that they alone, of the great nations of the world, have

<sup>1</sup> The following remarks by Lafcadio Hearn on the question of the admission of foreign capital into Japan are not inapposite. "It appears to me that any person comprehending, even in the vaguest way, the nature of money-power and the average conditions of life throughout Japan, must recognise the certainty that foreign capital, with right of land-tenure, would find means to control legislation, to control government, and to bring about a state of affairs that would result in the practical domination of the Empire by alien interests. . . . Japan has incomparably more to fear from English or American capital than from Russian battleships and bayonets." (*Japan: An Interpretation*, p. 510.) Urgent economic considerations have, of course, compelled Japan not only to admit foreign capital in enormous amounts, but even to make heavy sacrifices in order to obtain it; but if any other course had been open to her she would gladly have adopted it.

no judicial authority over the foreigners who reside within their territorial limits, and they know that the reasons why they are in this undignified position are that their laws are to some extent inconsistent with Western legal theories, that many or most of their judicial officers are corrupt, that torture is sometimes resorted to as a means of extorting confessions, and that their prisons are dens of filth and disease. Knowing that until these matters are remedied it will be impossible to persuade the Western Powers to relinquish jurisdiction over their own nationals, the Chinese have devoted a good deal of attention during recent years to the reform of their judicial procedure and—under Japanese and other foreign advice—to the production of a new legal code.<sup>1</sup> Time will show whether the importation of a brand-new legal system into a country like China will effect all the good that is expected of it. There is a very serious danger that by adapting Western legal notions to a country in which the native legal system (however faulty in practice in some respects) has for many centuries been closely intertwined with the traditions and customs that govern the lives of the Chinese people, the Government may be applying a treatment that will act as a solvent of the bases of the entire social organism. Even the abolition of foreign consular jurisdiction might be bought too dearly if it necessitated a surrender of doctrines and principles which, as we have seen in the foregoing chapters, have formed the foundation of the social and political system of China throughout the whole of her known history.

If in the matter of finance the Chinese Government

<sup>1</sup> Article xii. of the Mackay Treaty reads thus: "China having expressed a strong desire to reform her judicial system and to bring it into accord with that of Western nations, Great Britain agrees to give every assistance to such reform, and she will also be prepared to relinquish her extra-territorial rights when she is satisfied that the state of the Chinese laws, the arrangement for their administration, and other considerations warrant her doing so."



would unquestionably do well to act on the advice of the best foreign expert it can get, it is by no means so certain that it would be wise to follow foreign counsel, with tacit obedience, in all matters affecting social, administrative, or even judicial reform. That changes are urgently needed in certain directions goes without saying; but in view of the impossibility of carrying out extensive legal reforms in China without simultaneously affecting the social organism, perhaps in serious and unexpected ways, it will be well for the stability of the State if amid the contending factions into which the intelligent sections of the country are sure to be divided there may always be one party in the land whose programme will be summed up in the words "Back to Confucius!" That such a call will ever be literally obeyed is quite improbable and certainly undesirable; but it is earnestly to be hoped that however drastic may be the social and political changes that China is destined to undergo her people may never come to regard Confucianism, with all that the term implies, merely as a fossil in the stratum of a dead civilisation.

In the course of the foregoing chapters an attempt has been made to show that there is much fundamental soundness in many of China's social institutions, much that it is to the interest of China herself and of the whole world to respect and conserve. It is difficult to say whether China stands at present in greater danger from her own over-enthusiastic revolutionary reformers or from her well-meaning but somewhat ignorant foreign friends who are pressing her to accept Western civilisation with all its political and social machinery and its entire religious and ethical equipment. If ever a State required skilful guidance and wise statesmanship, China needs them now; but wise statesmanship will not consist in tearing up all the old moral and religious sanctions that have been rooted in the hearts of the Chinese people through all the ages of their wonderful history.





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Chinese words that appear in the text of this book and in the index have been given their Pekingese sounds in accordance with Wade's system of transliteration.—R.F.J.]

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Map  
of  
**WEIHAWEI**

Scale of Miles  
0 1 2 3 4 5 6

Boundary of Territory .....  
Boundary between North & South Divisions .....







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